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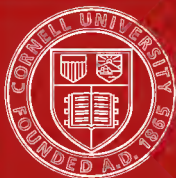
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To Mama
(from John III)

Dec. 25, 1901.



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A BOOK OF VERSES

▼ A BOOK OF ▼ VERSES

NIXON WATERMAN

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A BOOK OF VERSES



A ROSE TO THE LIVING

A ROSE to the living is more
Than sumptuous wreaths to the dead;
In filling love's infinite store,
A rose to the living is more,
If graciously given before
The hungering spirit is fled, —
A rose to the living is more
Than sumptuous wreaths to the dead.

THANKSGIVING

WERE there no God, I still would thank The
Source, though all unknown,
Wherein are born the joys of men, the gifts I call
my own.

The heart impels the tongue to speak since to
my lot belong
A woman's love, a sheaf of grain, a lily and a
song.

The savage beast, the poison vine, the evil of the
earth, —

I know not if the good and bad were only one at
birth ;

But all the world seems gracious when I set
against the wrong

A woman's love, a sheaf of grain, a lily and a
song.

ONCE IN A WHILE

ONCE in a while the sun shines out,
And the arching skies are a perfect blue ;
Once in a while mid clouds of doubt
Hope's brightest stars come peeping through.
Our paths lead down by the meadows fair,
Where the sweetest blossoms nod and smile,
And we lay aside our cross of care
Once in a while.

Once in a while within our own
We clasp the hand of a steadfast friend ;
Once in a while we hear a tone
Of love with the heart's own voice to blend ;
And the dearest of all our dreams come true,
And on life's way is a golden mile ;
Each thirsting flower is kissed with dew
Once in a while.

Once in a while in the desert sand
We find a spot of the fairest green ;
Once in a while from where we stand
The hills of Paradise are seen ;

Once in a While

And a perfect joy in our hearts we hold,
A joy that the world cannot defile;
We trade earth's dross for the purest gold
Once in a while.

MY CASTLE OF GOLD

IF the fairies should build me a castle of gold
And wreathe it with flower and vine,
And set it with jewels of value untold,
And fill it with music and wine;
'T would still be a sorrowful prison of gloom,
My spirit would long to be free,
And Love would lie weeping his grief in the
tomb,
Were you ne'er to share it with me.

Should the Fates, in the sorriest hut, say I must
Forever abide, to their law
I would happily bow; I would live on a crust,
I would lie on a pallet of straw,
I would crown me with thorns, I would fervently
pray
My joy-time might never be o'er,
If you, O my love! could pass by every day
And, smiling, look in at the door.

My Castle of Gold

For you are my marvelous castle of gold,
And you are my flower and vine,
And you are my jewels of value untold,
And you are my music and wine.
Alone, and a famine stalks close at my side,
The joys of the living have ceased ;
With you, and the world is as fair as a bride,
And filled with a fount and a feast.

THE DREAM-SONG

OH, the drip, drip, drip of the rain, the rain,
The drip, drip, drip of the rain;
The sweet, sad song the whole night long
Is sung in my drowsy brain.
In a dream I rest in the old home nest,
And my mother comes again
As came she oft with a step as soft
As the drip, drip, drip of the rain,
The rain,
The drip, drip, drip of the rain.

Oh, the drip, drip, drip of the rain, the rain,
The drip, drip, drip of the rain;
As it weaves the woof of the song on the roof
With the warp of the sound at the pane.
And my dream-ship sails with the happy gales
That ripple the broad, blue main,
While the waves, soft-tossed, in my dreams are lost
Mid the drip, drip, drip of the rain,
The rain,
The drip, drip, drip of the rain.

The Dream-Song

Oh, the drip, drip, drip of the rain, the rain,
 The drip, drip, drip of the rain ;
Like the drowsy croon of bees in June
 Is the song and the soft refrain.
And I drift away through a golden bay
 By the shores of my castled Spain,
While my soul grows young in the dream-song sung
 Mid the drip, drip, drip of the rain,
 The rain,
The drip, drip, drip of the rain.

THE ROSE AND THE LILY

A RED rose in the garden sighed
To be the south wind's happy bride,
And when the rover wooing came
Her heart with love was all aflame.
With honeyed word and soft caress
He won his bride of loveliness,
And all her leaves so warm and fair
He scattered, ah ! I know not where.

A stately lily, standing near,
From every wooer turned her ear
With dignity that nearly froze,
As though to chide the foolish rose.
Nor came there lover with the art
To charm her cold, unfeeling heart ;
She glanced disdainfully at them
Until she withered on her stem.

Oh, mingled joys that blight and bless !
Which knew the truer happiness, —
The lily pure with heart of frost,
Or warm, red rose that loved and lost ?

LIFE'S WAYS

THE ways are long I walk alone, —
The fields are dull and dreary;
The paths are set with thorn and stone, —
My heart is worn and weary.
But skies are all a tender blue,
And filled with sunny weather,
When in the paths of joy we two
Walk, hand in hand, together.

I hear the happy thrushes tune
Their song in bush and bower;
I hear the bees their story croon
From honeyed flower to flower.
The music stirs me with distress, —
I cannot kindly bear it,
For, oh, there is no joy unless
Your heart with mine may share it.

Oh, come with me and glad the way
With eyes of beauty smiling;
December seems as glad as May
In your divine beguiling.

Life's Ways

For, though we stray through gardens fair,
Or weary wastes of heather,
The paths are good and golden where
We two may walk together.

JUST COMMON FOLKS

A HUNDRED humble songsters trill
The notes that to their lays belong,
Where just one nightingale might fill
The place with its transcendent song.
Fame comes to men, and with its smile
Some favored soul with greatness cloaks,
And leaves a thousand else the while
To be for aye just common folks.

If only sweetest bells were rung,
How we should miss the minor chimes !
If only grandest poets sung,
There 'd be no simple, little rhymes.
The modest, clinging vines add grace
To all the forest's giant oaks,
And mid earth's mighty is a place
To people with just common folks.

Not they the warriors who shall win
Upon the battlefield a name
To sound above the awful din ;
Not theirs the painter's deathless fame ;

Just Common Folks

Nor theirs the poet's muse that brings
The rhythmic gift his soul invokes :
Theirs but to do the simple things
That duty gives just common folks.

They are the multitudes of earth
And mingle ever with the crowd,
Elbowing those of equal birth,
Where none because of caste is proud.
Bound by a strange, capricious fate,
That oftentimes its decree revokes,
Between the lowly and the great
Are millions of just common folks.

Fate has not lifted them above
The level of the human plane ;
They share with men a fellow-love,
In touch with pleasure and with pain.
One great, far-reaching brotherhood,
With common burdens, common yokes,
And common wrongs and common good —
God's army of just common folks.

WHICH ROAD?

IF you could go back to the forks of the road,
Back the long miles you have carried the load;
Back to the place where you had to decide
By this way or that through your life to abide;
Back of the grieving and back of the care,
Back to the place where the future was fair, —
If you were this day that decision to make,
O brother in sorrow! which road would you take?

Then suppose that again to the forks you went
back,
After you'd trodden the other long track;
After you'd found that its promises fair
Were all a delusion that led to a snare, —
That the road you first travelled with sighs and
unrest,
Though dreary and rough, was most graciously
blest,
With balm for each bruise and a charm for each
ache, —
O brother in sorrow! which road would you take?

THE WINE OF LIFE

YOU 'd call her plain-faced, did you pass
her by

In an unthinking mood, nor hear her speak,
Nor catch the soul-light burning in her eye,

Its flame close-hidden by her modest cheek.
But love is everything. Who stops to think

Upon the pattern of the flagon when
He knows 't is filled with the divinest drink
The gods have proffered to the lips of men !

LOVE AND REASON

THE lily's lips are pure and white without a
touch of fire ;

The rose's heart is warm and red and sweetened
with desire.

In earth's broad fields of deathless bloom the
gladdest lives are those

Whose thoughts are as the lily and whose love is
like the rose.

LINDEN STREET

SNUG Linden Street is good and fair,
With modest homes all in a row,
And many a little garden where
The quaint, old-fashioned roses grow.
And when at eve the happy birds
Nest where the whisp'ring tree-tops meet,
Fond lovers, with their honeyed words,
Walk, hand in hand, through Linden Street.

It is not grand, it is not wide, —
This little street I love so well, —
Yet in its quiet grace abide
The joys my tongue can never tell.
When from its happy scenes I stray
And lose the charm so strange and sweet,
My dreams by night, my thoughts by day
In rapture turn to Linden Street.

How often, when a child, I felt
This dear, old earth must seem forlorn
To sorry hearts that never dwelt
Within the street where I was born !

Linden Street

And even now I dare to think
The charm of life is more complete
To those whose favored eyes may drink
The joy that dwells in Linden Street.

Yet Grief has sprinkled with her tears
This street where happy children play,
And sun and shadow, through the years,
Have blended as they blend to-day.
But mid the ever-changing scene,
Of lagging cares and pleasures fleet,
Through Winter's gray and Summer's green
Has shone the grace of Linden Street.

I look upon the map and see
The far-spread lands that make the earth,
Yet all are but a map to me
Beyond the land that gave me birth.
And here I seek my sacred shrine, —
Love's blissful world with joys replete,
That God has given me and mine, —
Our little home in Linden Street.

FOR HER DEAR SAKE

FOR her dear sake I'd have her skies
As bright as are her own bright eyes,
And all her day-dreams warm and fair
As is the sunshine in her hair.
The Fates to her should be as kind
As are the thoughts in her pure mind;
And every bird I'd have awake
Its gladdest song for her dear sake.

For her dear sake I'd have each dart
Grief fashions for her tender heart
Aimed at my own thrice happy breast,
That hers might have unbroken rest.
She feel life's sunshine, I its rain;
She steal my pleasure, I her pain;
Her path of roses I would make,
And mine of thorns, for her dear sake.

If she should fall asleep and lie
So still, so very still, that I
Would know her soul had slipped away
From her divinely moulded clay,

For her Dear Sake

Then, looking in her fair, white face,
I'd pray to God: "In thy good grace,
O Father! let me sleep, nor wake
Again on earth, for her dear sake."

THE BATTLE ALONG THE SHORE

THE Seven Seas are leagued as one
In war against the Earth ;
They are joined in awful strife begun
When the great God gave them birth.
By day and night they force the fight
And curse in a sullen roar,
As with clenched hands they beat the sands
In the battle along the shore.

But ever the Earth hurls back their shock
From thick-walled forts he rears
On cape and headland, hewn of rock,
To stand ten thousand years.
The mad waves sweep and lash and leap,
And pound at gate and door,
But the old Earth laughs, as their foam he
quaffs,
In the battle along the shore.

The Battle along the Shore

The wars of men shall come and go,
And the maps shall all be changed;
The passing things that mortals know
Shall all be disarranged.
But till the last long day is passed
And time shall be no more,
The Earth and Sea at war shall be
In the battle along the shore.

THE PRAIRIE-FIRE

WAKE, good Muse! My pen inspire,
Let me sketch the prairie-fire;
Let me draw it as I saw it in the olden, golden
days,
In the Indian summer weather,
When, with wind and sun together,
Grew the grasses ripe and ready for the coming
of the blaze.

Like a vast Sahara — sombered,
Frost-browned — stretched the miles unnum-
bered, —
Waving wastes that dipped and dappled to the
wide world's distant rim;
And my father's cabin nesting
In the vasty reach seemed resting
Like a shrine of shade and shelter for the joy of
his and him.

The Prairie-Fire

Shone the sun a drowsy dullard,
Bronzed his brows or copper-colored,
All his brightness shrouded, clouded, all his
 glances toned and tame;
While in silken shreds came sifting
Ashen ghosts of grasses drifting
On the breath of breezes stealing from the far-off
 feasts of flame.

On the sky-line, wide, upwelling,
Graver grew the smoke-wreaths, swelling
Till the heavens, dimmed and darkened, met and
 mingled with the night,
When, upon the gale, swift-sweeping,
Fierce-flung fronts of flame came leaping,
Tossing skyward all their torches till the clouds
 burned brassy bright.

'Twixt its fire-guards, many-furrowed,
Safe our little cabin burrowed;
Meek and mute defiance bidding to the foes that
 would destroy:
Oh, that roar like distant thunder!
Oh, that night of weirdest wonder!
Oh, that picture plainly pencilled in the brain-
 book of a boy!

The Prairie-Fire

Came the morning sun, upspringing,
All his golden gleams far flinging ;
But the fenceless fields of prairie held the ebon
hue of night,
Till, in dreams of shine and shower,
Velvet plain and spring's fair flower,
Lay they wrapped in softest slumber under win-
ter's robe of white.

THE OLD WIFE

MAKE the old wife young again,
Twine the roses in her hair ;
Tell her, as you told her then,
“ You are wonderfully fair ! ”
Look into her eyes and say, —
Smile and say it through your tears, —
“ You are dearer every day,
Nearer, dearer with the years ! ”

Hold her hand in kindly grasp, —
Once you pressed it to your lips,
While its tender, velvet clasp
Thrilled you to your finger-tips.
Kiss her faded cheek and brow
With a love so warm and true
They shall glow with crimson, now,
Blushing as they used to do.

To the sunset of your lives,
Lead, oh, lead her gently on.
Love until the end survives
With the freshness of the dawn.

The Old Wife

Drift amid its golden gleams
Out across the sunlit seas,
On a pillow made of dreams,
And a couch of memories.

A ROBIN'S SONG AT DAYBREAK

HALF-WAY between the dark and dawn,
Ere day had come or night had gone ;
Somewhere between the bliss of dreams and
dread of waking wearily,
Still half unconscious that I heard,
There came the far, faint voice of bird,
The welcome daybreak greeting of a robin
singing cheerily.

The song seemed like a ribbon slight
Drawn 'tween the realms of day and night,
And as I listened to the notes my heart went
beating merrily ;
Would that the world on waking from
Its dreams to toil might ever come,
Joyed by the daybreak welcome of a robin
singing cheerily.

A WALK THROUGH THE WOODS

A WALK through the woods in September
Is bliss I can never define ;
The red leaves that glow like an ember
Make gorgeous the tree and the vine.
With earth and the sky for my teacher
I worship with sun and with sod,
Forgetting the priest and the preacher,
For now I am walking with God.

The hills are as hymns of high pleasure,
The valleys as rosaried rhyme,
And, set to the loftiest measure,
The forest an anthem sublime.
No more on man's teaching dependent,
From cant and from creed I am free ;
And Beauty and Truth are transcendent,
For God is now walking with me.

MY CASTLE IN SPAIN

MY castle in Spain is a place of delight,
Where I joyfully wander at morning and
night ;

Of all life's high pleasure the happiest hours
Are those I devote to its fountains and flowers.
Whenever my mind in a reverie swings,
Hope bears me away on her jubilant wings,
To leave me, -forgetful of care and of pain,
A fortunate prince at my castle in Spain.

My castle in Spain, oh, its caskets of gold,
Of rubies and pearls, are a joy to behold ;
And riches for which I must ever despair
In this workaday world, are awaiting me there.
Fond favors of fortune, that brighten and bless,
Drop down in my hands with the softest caress,
And I wish, with a sigh, I might ever remain
At my marvelous, far-away castle in Spain.

My Castle in Spain

My castle in Spain is as light as the air,
For its walls are a dream and its roof is a prayer;
Its courts and its halls of such wonderful scope
I have gorgeously gemmed with the treasures of
 hope.

Its domes and its tapering spires are wrought
Of the mystical beauty that hides in a thought;
And to view them sweet fancy steals into my
 brain,

Where it sees, through a vision, my castle in
 Spain.

WHEN SHE WAS NEAR

MY mother's heart was honey,
And her kiss was sweetest balm,
And, though the world was full of storm,
Her lap was full of calm.
Her arms and breast were filled with rest,
Her smile was full of joy,
And life was dear when she was near
And I a little boy.

The world is full of golden gifts,
And yet my spirit sighs
Between the gracious long agoes
And happy by and byes.
I am aweary of the cares
That fill the lives of men;
I would I were a little child
Within those arms again.

For my mother's heart was honey,
And her kiss was sweetest balm,
And, though the world was full of storm,
Her lap was full of calm.

When She was Near

Her arms and breast were filled with rest,
Her smile was full of joy,
And life was dear when she was near
And I a little boy.

THE EMPIRE SHIP

I HAVE sung my songs to the stately ships
that are sailing the Seven Seas,
But to-day I sing of a cruder craft that laughed
at the lulling breeze, —
Of the "Prairie Schooner," quaint and slow, with
its dim and dusky sails,
A phantom ship from the long-ago, adrift in
the grass-grown trails.
Westward, ho ! Westward, ho !
Out where the winds are sweet and low
And the grassy cradles swing and sway,
The star of empire takes its way,
Westward, ho !

Ere the bellowing steed of steel and steam had
startled the timid deer,
When the curlew whistled its plaintive call to the
gray grouse nesting near,

The Empire Ship

Through the fair, fresh prairies, hushed and hid,
 where the wild wolf made her den,
There came this land-launched schooner manned
 by bronzed and brawny men.
Westward, ho ! Westward, ho !
Out where the bold, brisk breezes blow,
And a young world walks in the fields of
 May,
The star of empire takes its way,
 Westward, ho !

And in that marvelous ship that sailed to the
 shores of the wondrous West,
Was a mother who carolled a song of joy to the
 babe at her happy breast ;
And stowed away in the good ship's hold were
 a book and plough and pen,
And a sickle and seeds — yea ! all God needs
 for the making of matchless men.
Westward, ho ! Westward, ho !
Out where the golden harvests glow
And the builders are building day by day,
The star of empire takes its way,
 Westward, ho !

MY LADY'S HEART

WEALTH, with his golden keys a score,
And all his gilded art,
Tried vainly to unlock the door
That held My Lady's heart.

Love came and through the keyhole sighed,
"I've neither bonds nor stocks,"
When, lo ! My Lady rose, a bride,
And pushed back all the locks.

MEMORIES

IF you've ever been a rover
Through the fields of fragrant clover,
Where life is all a simple round of bliss,
When at eve the sun is sinking
Or the stars are faintly blinking,
You can call to mind a picture such as this:
Hark! the cows are homeward roaming
Through the pasture's dewy gloaming,
I can hear them gently lowing through the dells,
While from out the bosky dingle
Come the softly tangled jingle
And the oft-repeated echo of the bells.

Strange how Memory will fling her
Arms about some scenes we bring her,
And the fleeting years but make them fonder
grow;
Though I wander far and sadly
From that dear old home, how gladly
I recall the cherished scenes of long ago.

Memories

Hark! the cows are homeward roaming
Through the pasture's dewy gloaming,
I can hear them gently lowing through the dells,
While from out the bosky dingle
Come the softly tangled jingle
And the oft-repeated echo of the bells.

THE YEAR'S DELIGHTS

WHEN the days are chill and the winds are
shrill

And the snow-wreaths crown the earth,
Then the kind fates lend a book and a friend
And a seat by the glowing hearth.
And the hoarse, deep shout of the storm without,
And the Frost's breath keen and thin,
Add cheer and grace to the firelit face
Of the friend and the book within.

When the wild-bird calls, then away with walls
For the fields and the open sky!
For the land and sea are a home for me,
And the big world, broad and high.
Then I find my books in the running brooks,
And my friends by the wave-washed shores,
Where we glean and grow in the glint and glow
Of the boundless out-of-doors.

A MIDDLE-AGED LOVE STORY

WITH every tick of the clock, my dear,
The days go singing by,
And the skies are blue and our hearts are true,
And there's love in your laughing eye.
And never you care if the silver hair
Steals into each golden lock,
For your heart must know you dearer grow
With every tick of the clock.

With every tick of the clock, my dear,
We drift from the shores of youth,
And we swifter glide on the broader tide
Of the grander sea of truth.
The flight of time but smoothes to rhyme
Life's every grief and shock,
And we nearer grow in love's glad glow
With every tick of the clock.

JUNE

JUNE, and the skies brimming over
 With seas of the tenderest blue;
June, and the bloom of the clover,
 Heavy with honey and dew;
June, and the reeds and the rushes,
 Slender and lithesome and long;
June, and the larks and the thrushes
 Singing their happiest song.

June, and the rose in her beauty
 Making an Eden again;
June, and desire is duty
 Crowning the wishes of men;
June, in her leaves and her laces
 Gladding the earth with a smile;
June, and the gods and the Graces
 Dwelling with mortals awhile.

THE PLAYHOUSE

IT was n't a house at all, you see,
But only a big, flat stone;
Yet they called it a house, did the sisters three,
As they tarried there and sipped their tea;
And each was as glad as a queen might be, —
A queen on a golden throne.

And one was like a lily rare,
And one was like a rose;
And one had stolen a happy share
Of blended grace from her sisters fair;
And all were lovely beyond compare, —
My queens of the long agoes.

The house was close by the garden gate,
And under the apple-trees,
In whose broad branches, early and late,
The robin sang to his joyous mate
As a lithe limb, feeling his happy weight,
Swung low in the summer breeze.

The Playhouse

And many a golden afternoon
The sisters chatted there,
With hearts as glad as the skies of June,
With hearts as soft as a mother's croon,
With hearts that withered and all too soon
With a grief they could not bear.

I wandered far in the paths of men,
I lingered long and late
To win the golden prize, and then
I set my heart for the "home" again,
But the world seemed changed and cheerless when
I stood by that garden gate.

In woe I sat me down to weep,
For my heart was sad and lone,
And my gold seemed all so poor and cheap,—
There was little left I cared to keep,
And I wished I were wrapped in a dreamless sleep
And under that big, flat stone.

ENVIRONMENT

SHINE or shadow, flame or frost,
Zephyr-kissed or tempest-tossed,
Night or day, or dusk or dawn,
We are strangely lived upon.

Mystic builders in the brain —
Mirth and sorrow, joy and pain,
Grief and gladness, gloom and light —
Build, oh, build my heart aright !

O ye friends, with pleasant smiles,
Help me build my precious whiles ;
Bring me blocks of gold to make
Strength that wrong shall never shake.

Day by day I gather from
All you give me. I become
Yet a part of all I meet
In the fields and in the street.

Environment

Bring me songs of hope and youth,
Bring me bands of steel and truth;
Bring me love wherein to find
Charity for all mankind.

Place within my hands the tools
And the Master Builder's rules,
That the walls we fashion may
Stand forever and a day.

Help me build a palace where
All is wonderfully fair —
Built of truth, the while, above,
Shines the pinnacle of love.

THE OLD, OLD STORY

WHERE the fields are strewn with the wealth
of June

And the sunshine glads the day,
Where the boys and girls in the swaths and swirls
Are raking the new-mown hay,
There are tender sighs, there are melting eyes
And a thrill at the touch of hands,
For doves will coo and youth will woo
As long as the old earth stands.

Where the loom's dull song the whole day long
Through the factory ward is whirred,
Whose slaves ne'er see fields glad and free,
Nor list to the voice of bird,
There are tender sighs, there are melting eyes
And a thrill at the touch of hands,
For doves will coo and youth will woo
As long as the old earth stands.

The Old, Old Story

And slave or free, on land or sea,
It counts not where nor when ;
And weal or woe, this truth we know, —
Where'er there are maids and men,
There are tender sighs, there are melting eyes
And a thrill at the touch of hands,
For doves will coo and youth will woo
As long as the old earth stands.

A BACHELOR'S REVERIE

O H, a home is a terrible handicap
To a soul that would fain be free;
It has captured many a prisoned chap,
But it never shall shackle me.
Instead of the cares I would have to face,
In the same old rounds each day,
Oh, give me a room in a lodging-place
And a lunch at a chance café.

I never need hurry to catch my car,
For I have n't a place to go,
And early or late no meal I mar,
For I'm dining alone, you know.
The hands of the clock I never chase,
For I drift in an easy way,
Since I sleep in a transient lodging-place
And lunch at a chance café.

A brother of mine — I loved him well! —
Went wrong in his early years,
For he married and found him a place to dwell,
(Oh, the thought of it brings me tears!)

A Bachelor's Reverie

And there he has lived — what a pitiful case ! —

And there he will, likely, stay,

While I still sleep in a lodging-place

And lunch at a chance café.

I sometimes think of his wife and child

And the vine at his cottage door,

While I dream of the perfect lips that smiled —

But they smile for me no more.

And I muse, “ If the saint with the angel face

Had answered me ‘yes’ that day,

Would I sleep in a transient lodging-place

Or lunch at a chance café? ”

AN IDOL OF CLAY

WHAT did she give for her wedding-ring?
All that a woman may !

What did the gifts to the giver bring?

Only an idol of clay.

All the sweet dreams of her girlhood years,

All that a heart could hold ;

All of her hopes and all of her fears,

All of her smiles and all of her tears,

For one little circle of gold.

Told she the world of the bitter cheat?

Ah, no ! With a smiling face

She clothed her idol from head to feet

With the garments of her grace.

And no one knew of the tears she wept ;

Her griefs they were never guessed,

For hid in her heart of hearts she kept

Her thorns of woe. And so she slept

With her hands across her breast.

THE SONG THE KETTLE SINGS

SWEET are the songs by lovers sung
As they the old, old story tell,
And sweet the croon of bees among
The clover-blooms and asphodel;
And glad the notes the skylarks trill
At dawn upon their buoyant wings;
But dearer, softer, better still
The low, sweet song the kettle sings.

How strangely come to us again
The pleasant scenes of other days,
The happy, golden moments when
We went our simple, childish ways;
When all life's journey lay before
And gaily beckoned us with smiles,
Ere we had left our father's door
To go the many, weary miles.

There by the broad, deep fireplace sit
The aged ones with silvered hair;
Across each face the flashes flit,
And faded cheeks grow flushed and fair;

The Song the Kettle Sings

And strangely mingle smile and tear
As memory in fondness brings
The old, old days, the while they hear
The low, sweet song the kettle sings.

The embers throw their ruddy gleam
On childish figures glad and free
That watch the changing glow and dream
Of wondrous things that are to be.
The future one sweet chime of bells —
Of golden bells, Hope ever rings;
And through their music softly wells
The low, sweet song the kettle sings.

Oh, all the joys my heart has known,
And all the hopes of those to be
Within the kettle's gentle tone
On gracious wings are borne to me.
And gladness which my care beguiles
Comes bubbling up from youthful springs;
And whispers from the Peaceful Isles
Are in the song the kettle sings.

Would you become a youth again,
Back in that dear old home once more —

The Song the Kettle Sings

Trade all the wisdom sorry men
May have for childhood's happy lore ?
Oh, would you feel the morning dew
Of rest upon life's tired wings?
Then dream with me and listen to
The low, sweet song the kettle sings.

WHEN GRANDMA SHUTS HER EYES

WITHIN the chimney-corner snug,
Dear grandma gently rocks,
And knits her daughter's baby boy
A tiny pair of socks.
But sometimes grandma shuts her eyes
And sings the softest lullabies.

Across her face the happy smiles
All play at hide and seek,
And kiss the faint and faded rose
That lingers on her cheek,
While thoughts too sweet for words arise
When dear old grandma shuts her eyes.

Yet, sometimes, pictures in her face
Have just a shade of pain,
As golden April sunshine when
It mingles with the rain ;
And then, perchance, she softly sighs,
Does grandma, when she shuts her eyes.

When Grandma Shuts her Eyes

She's growing younger every day,
She's quite a child again ;
And those she knew in girlhood's years
She speaks of now and then ;
And sweet old love-songs feebly tries,
Does grandma, when she shuts her eyes.

I used to wonder why her eyes
She closed, but not in sleep,
The while the smiles would all about
Her wrinkled visage creep ;
But I have guessed the truth at last :
She shuts her eyes to view the past.

PEACE ON EARTH

O SOLDIER! must you longer stay?
Have not the centuries sufficed
To teach mankind the better way —
Have you not heard of Christ?

Forget the battle-cry; instead
Sing joyous songs of peace and trust.
Let swords that once with blood were red
Grow redder still with rust.

Turn from the eagles; woo the dove,
For it will glad the angels more
If you will train a vine above
A lowly cottage door.

And give your bayonet so bright —
If you would serve the greatest good —
To make a pen wherewith to write
A song of brotherhood.

FIELD FLOWERS

THE simple, little wayside rose
To me is sweeter far,
And more begirt with grace, than those
From sheltered gardens are ;
And vagrant shreds of homeless song
May keener pleasures hold
Than to the grander bards belong,
Though bound in silk and gold.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

IT seems to me I'd like to go
Where bells don't ring nor whistles blow,
Nor clocks don't strike nor gongs don't sound,
But where there's stillness all around.

Not real still stillness; just the trees'
Low whisperings or the croon of bees;
The drowsy tinklings of the rill,
Or twilight song of whippoorwill.

'T would be a joy could I behold
The dappled fields of green and gold,
Or in the cool, sweet clover lie
And watch the cloud-ships drifting by.

I'd like to find some quaint old boat,
And fold its oars, and with it float
Along the lazy, limpid stream
Where water-lilies drowse and dream.

Far from the Madding Crowd

Sometimes it seems to me I must
Just quit the city's din and dust,
For fields of green and skies of blue;
And, say ! how does it seem to you ?

A LOVE SONG

IT 's a dull, dark day when you 're away,
A bright one when you 're near,
For gladdest skies are in your eyes,
Your smile is shine and cheer.
Your face is like a garden fair
Where radiant roses bloom
And all the flowers rich and rare
Have spilled their sweet perfume.

I know not if our dream most fond
The last long sleep survives ;
I know not what may lie beyond
The story of our lives ;
But all the human joys that thrill
In ecstasy divine
Would be but sorry grief until
I held your hand in mine.

THAT LITTLE BACK ROOM, TOP FLOOR

OUR dream came true, and we own — we
two —

The wonderful home we planned
In the old, glad times of the sweetest rhymes,
When I sought your fair, white hand, —
When my heart's request was to build a nest,
“Next thing to heaven!” I swore;
And it was, for, oh, Love dwelt, you know,
In that little back room, top floor.

It seemeth well we here should dwell,
And settle us down and sup,
And sing our lays to the good old days
When we could not settle up.
“With thanks” came back my rhymes, alack!
And our hearts were sometimes sore
When the landlord sent for his past due rent
Of that little back room, top floor.

That Little Back Room, Top Floor

Like a fleeting year it seems, my dear,
But I know it was long ago,
For your tresses rare are now more fair
Than they were at the time — you know —
(The months my brain in a wild, deep pain,
Refused to serve us more) —
They were sold to stay the wolf away
From that little back room, top floor.

The gods have brought the gifts we sought,
For we own our vine and roof;
But my heart still strays to the strange, sweet
days
When the Muses held aloof.
And my thought's fleet ship makes many a trip
To a far-off, golden shore,
While I steal the themes for all my dreams
From that little back room, top floor.

BITTER-SWEET

JUST a few tears sprinkled in with our laughter,
Just a few clouds in the blue of the sky;
Showers make brighter the shine that comes after,
Smiles are the sweeter that follow a sigh.

Just a few griefs in the midst of our gladness,
Only for toil there could never be rest.
Songs we love most hold a shadow of sadness,
Joys that are touched with a sorrow are best.

Just a few graves in a land of the living,
Just a few moans in the midst of our mirth,
Just a few wrongs and the bliss of forgiving
Bring the heart glimpses of heaven on earth.

TOWARD SUNSET

O H, come, my love, and walk with me
Through the orchard's leafy ways,
And hear the song of bird and bee
We heard in other days.
When all the world was good and kind,
When hearts were warm and true,
And the narrowest path our feet could find
Was wide enough for two.

Once more we'll keep a loving tryst
Beneath the bending boughs,
Where first your trembling lips were kissed,
And first we breathed our vows.
There where with beating heart you came
To greet me at the bars,
And, waiting, I would speak your name,
And spell it in the stars.

Time sprinkles frost upon our heads,
But love's eternal youth
Dwells in each happy breast and sheds
The beauty born of truth.

Toward Sunset

And heart to heart and lip to lip
We 'll breathe our vows divine,
Till in the last long sleep you slip
Your loving hand in mine.

COULD WE BUT KNOW

THE brooklet's babble weaves the tones
That come from all its hidden stones.
The river's tide reflects its source
And all that joins it on its course.
Life's causes lie so deep and far,
And men are only what they are.
Oh, could we read the hearts of those
About us, know their hidden woes, —
The secret sources of despair,
The birth and burden of their prayer ;
See thrown about their lives the mesh
Of pain from thorns within the flesh,
Our charity would lend the grace
Of goodness to every face.

TO THE END

“**F**OR old sake’s sake” Love sings his song
amid the ruins where
The garden bloomed in beauty when the world
was young and fair;
And on the broken statue’s brow a rosied wreath
he binds:
“ Love is not love which alters when it alteration
finds.”

SERENADE

SLEEP, my loved one, sleep and dream,
Sleep and dream of me ;
While the fair moon's mellow beam,
Mingled with the stars' soft gleam,
Falls on wood and lea.

Lambs within the happy fold
Dream of meadows new,
Where the buttercups of gold
In a perfumed chalice hold
Honeyed drops of dew.

Zephyrs rock the robin's nest
In the tall elm-tree
Peacefully as stirs thy breast :
Angels guard thy perfect rest, —
Sleep and dream of me.

LIFE'S SPRINGTIME

I FELL to thinking the world was old,
And joy had flown away ;
That the precious idols I dreamed were gold
Were, after all, but clay :
For it seemed so far to the happy times
When we met at the orchard bars,
And breathed our vows in the old, sweet
rhymes, —
We two, and the happy stars.

Last night as I came through the leafy dell,
Where long ago we strayed,
I hearkt to a happy lover tell
His vows to a fair young maid.
I heard the song of the whippoorwill
And the twilight coo of dove,
And lip met lip with a blissful thrill
In the first, sweet kiss of love.

Life's Springtime

I heard my daughter's daughter's voice, —
A voice from the days gone by, —
And it made my yearning soul rejoice
And my heart beat warm and high.
For I know while youth and beauty meet,
And men and maidens woo,
Life's wine will still be good and sweet,
And the old world glad and new.

A DREAM AT THE DESK

CHAINED to a desk, a slave, I dream
Of the good old days of yore,
And I see the boundless glow and gleam
Of the broad, blue skies, once more.
And the rare perfume of the clover-bloom
And the scent of the new-mown hay
Seem faintly caught in the sweet dream brought
From the years of the far-away.

The roar of the busy, babbling town
Which long my soul has heard,
For just one fleeting breath I drown
In the song of brook and bird.
My ledgers fade to glen and glade,
And fields of corn and rye,
As I catch the joy of a careless boy
From a dream of the years gone by.

I shall sometime flee from my prison cell
And its narrow walls of gloom;
I shall quit the noisy town and dwell
Where the sweet wild-roses bloom.

A Dream at the Desk

And I'll trade my care for the meadows fair
And the drowsy croon of bee,
While I hold as mine the bliss divine
A dream has brought to me.

THE CHILDREN OF EARTH

DOWN by the sea on a summer day
I doze and dream while the children play,
Gleefully heaping their hills of sand,
Calling them palaces high and grand;
A clam-shell serves for the great front door,
And the walk is a bit of a broken oar;
While plate and platter and bowl and cup
Are polished pebbles the sea brings up.

And king and queen in their royal state
Pass in and out through a sea-weed gate;
And lord and lady ride to and fro,
Till a far voice calls, "It is time to go."
To gems and jewels and palace rare
They bid farewell and they leave them there;
While the tide comes laughingly up the bay,
And the sand-made palace is washed away.

Deep in the city I see the men
Playing at childish games again;
Building a palace of brick and stone,
And playfully calling it all their own.

The Children of Earth

The walls are laid with the cares of wealth,
And the roof is patched with their broken health ;
And plate and platter and bowl and cup
Are polished trinkets their toil brings up.

And king and queen in their royal state
Pass in and out through a golden gate ;
And lord and lady ride to and fro
Till a far voice calls, " It is time to go."
From gems and jewels and palace rare
They turn away and they leave them there,
While Time looks down through a thousand years,
And the man-made palace, — it disappears.

THE LAND OF DREAMS

OF all the nations, east or west,
Imagination is the best.
Its boundless realms are richer, far,
Than all earth's other countries are.
Its azure skies are more serene,
Its verdant fields a fairer green,
And brooks sing softer music to
An ocean of diviner blue.

Its laughing, blossom-bordered rills
Dance down from Hope's triumphant hills,
Or pause in pools within the dale
Enchanted by the nightingale.
Spring blooms eternal and the rose
Makes fragrant every breeze that blows,
And fruits, with rounded cheeks of wine,
Hang purpling on the tree and vine.

This country is not pencilled on
The little maps that men have drawn.
It is too broad, too high, too great
For mind of man to calculate.

The Land of Dreams

And yet it is not far away,
But here and now, where mortals may,
With gods and graces, wander through
This land where all our dreams come true.

THE GARDEN OF GENIUS

I KNEW a dingy attic where
A poor, wan child in sorrow lay.
Hid in a narrow window, there,
A rosebush struggled toward the day;
And tears, like dew, at night and morn,
Sank down to warm the root entombed,
And from that prisoned plant was born
The sweetest rose that ever bloomed.

O garden of the soul! I knew —
Ah me! — I knew a little “den”
Where hungry, high-born Genius grew
The children of her brush and pen:
Amid the gloom there burned a gleam,
And patient hand was taught to draw,
And patient soul was taught to dream
The fairest lines I ever saw.

The fortune-favored fields may bring,
To those who toil, their meed of grain;
But Genius still her wealth will fling
Amid the thorny wastes of pain.

The Garden of Genius

The rose that blossomed through the tears,
And that high Soul of Art, these two,
Have brought to me, through all the years,
The dearest hope I ever knew.

A WINTER REVERIE

WHEN June comes laughing back again
with roses tangled in her hair
That in a silken mesh falls down to hide her
shoulders full and fair,
Then will she woo this drear old earth, and, brush-
ing back his locks of gray,
Within her soft arms rock him till she charms his
wintry scars away.

All day the honey-seeking bee will revel in the
clover-bloom,
All night the fireflies swing their lamps amid the
thicket's dotted gloom,
And song-birds, silent while the skies are dusty
with the sprinkled spheres,
Will, waking with the morning, drink the weep-
ing willow's dewy tears.

The prison-weary pauper in the frosty fastness of
the north,
When south-winds breathe away the bars, a purple
prince will wander forth ;

A Winter Reverie

And Folly, wanton sprite, will spice the happy
 hearts of maids and men
With moon-born dreams of Paradise when June
 comes laughing back again.

YELLOW BUTTERFLIES

DO you remember, sister dear, the golden
summers long ago,

When you and I through happy fields so gladly
wandered to and fro?

Do you recall the dewy morns we loitered on our
way to school

To watch the butterflies that danced about the
margin of the pool?

We loved the green of hill and vale, we loved the
blue that bent above ;

The brooks, the birds, the whispering woods, yet
more than these we seemed to love —

More than the pale wild-rose, half hid beneath
the hedges dark and cool —

The yellow butterflies that danced about the
margin of the pool.

Oh, long the paths of life and long the tender,
clinging dreams of youth,

But truth leads up to beauty still, and beauty
still leads up to truth.

Yellow Butterflies

And in our memories we hold, through all of
life's dull book and rule,
The yellow butterflies that danced about the
margin of the pool.

THE MOONBEAM'S MESSAGE

O MOON, that looks in at my window to-
night,

Hast thou added her smile to thy mellowing
light;

Hast thou stolen the languorous beauty that lies
Half-drowned in the fathomless depths of her
eyes?

Hast thou hung at her lattice, and peeping
between

The loosely drawn curtains within, hast thou seen
The grace of a form of such wonderful mould
Its charm were too great for the eye to behold?

Did she whisper a name? Did a sigh of unrest,
As a breeze stirs the forest, well up through her
breast?

And lips that were formed for the spelling of
bliss,

The ring that I gave, did they glad with a kiss?

The Moonbeam's Message

Did she look in thy face? Did she give thee one
glance

From eyes whose soft beauty must ever entrance?

If so, I would raise this petition to thee,

O moon! let that glance be reflected on me.

FRIENDS

YOU are my friend, for you have smiled with
me,

My help and hope in fair and stormy weather;
I like you for the joys you've whiled with me,
I love you for the griefs we've wept together.

I've held your hand when life was gold to me,
And shared with you its every gracious greeting;
You've brought good cheer when earth was cold
to me,
And made me feel your warm heart fondly
beating.

Though all the world were deaf and dark to me,
And long the night, and bleak the winds and
biting,

I know full well that you would hark to me,
And set my path with lamps of Love's glad
lighting.

You are my friend, for you have smiled with me,
My help and hope in fair and stormy weather;
I like you for the joys you've whiled with me,
I love you for the griefs we've wept together.

GOD ONLY KNOWS

WHITHER are going with hurrying feet
Forms that are passing to-night on the
street?

Faces all sunny and faces all sad,
Hearts that are weary and hearts that are glad;
Eyes that are heavy with sorrow and strife,
Eyes that are gleaming with beauty and life;
Pictures of pleasure and crosses of care,
Going — all going — God only knows where !

Hands that have earnestly striven for bread,
Hands that are soiled with dishonor instead;
Hearts that are tuned to a purpose sublime,
Hearts all discordant and jangled with crime;
Souls that are pure and as white as the snow,
Souls that are black as the midnight of woe;
Gay in their gladness or sad in despair,
Going — all going — God only knows where !

Some to the feast where the richest red wine
And rarest of jewels will sparkle and shine;

God only Knows

Some in their hunger will wander, and some
Will sleep nor awaken when morning shall come.
The robed and the ragged, the foe and the friend,
All of them hurrying on to the end,
Nearing the grave, with a curse or a prayer,
Going — all going — God only knows where.

A THRUSH'S SONG

IT was just before the battle,
In the rosy dawn of day, —
Ere the hosts, like maddened cattle,
Met amid the roar and rattle
Of the fierce and bloody fray.

And a picket-man, on duty,
Heard a thrush above him sing, —
Heard the liquid notes of beauty
From the wondrous, witching lute he
Hid beneath his happy wing.

And the music sent him dreaming
To the home-nest, far away;
And he saw her fond eyes beaming
On the baby's face a-gleaming
In his careless, cradle play.

Then there woke the awful thunder
Of the Death-King in his might;
Stately oaks were torn asunder

A Thrush's Song

While the heavens watched in wonder,
Till the darkness lulled the fight.

.

Where a wounded thrush was lying
Close beside a shattered nest,
There the night-wind wandered sighing
For the soldier who was dying
With a bullet in his breast.

HER AND ME

MUST have been the angels planned it, —
 Could not be it happened so, —
Yet I did not understand it
 When we met, so long ago.
Now, in looking back and viewing
 All the happy years, I see
What the good Lord has been doing
 For the joy of her and me.

Seems as though, if I had missed her,
 Way back yonder where we met, —
Never held her hand nor kissed her, —
 I'd be waiting for her yet.
Waiting for her smile so sunny,
 Filling all the world with cheer, —
For her words, as sweet as honey,
 Breathing music in my ear.

Been a world of joy and sorrow
 Since we vowed, "Till death do part," —
Bright to-day and dark to-morrow, —
 But we've met it, heart and heart.

Her and Me

Comes there calm or comes there billow,
True as steel our love shall be,
Till our cheeks shall press the pillow
Death will smooth for her and me.

NATURE'S PROMISE

SNOW in the valley and snow on the mountain,
And sparkles of frost on the roof and the
spire ;

The cold moonbeams fall on the ice-prisoned
fountain

The sun cannot free with his faint touch of fire.

But the song of the south-wind will waken the
clover,

The ring-dove will coo to his mate in the
bower ;

The frost-fashioned flake, when the winter is over,
A dewdrop will shine in the heart of a flower.

IN THE FIRELIGHT

THE smouldering backlog is nearly in two,
And the forestick is burned to the core;
The embers are blushing a tremulous hue,
While the wind in the chimney goes "woo-oo-oo!"
And, sadly, at window and door,
Is sighing that summer is o'er.
And a faint, little whispering, eery and queer,
Brings news I am waiting to know,—
The forces of Winter are marshalling near,—
It says in that strange little language we hear
When the fire is talking of snow.

My babies are blissfully dreaming in bed,
Close-wrapped is each innocent form;
With tender caress their "Good Nights" have
been said,
And with blankets soft-tucked round each dear
little head,
And cuddled so cozy and warm,
They fear not the breath of the storm.

In the Firelight

In front of the fireplace, beaming and bright,
Are their little shoes, all in a row,
Whose travel-worn soles seem to shiver with fright
When the wind hoarsely laughs in the chimney
at night
And the fire is talking of snow.

On the shadowy mantel the garrulous clock
Is sifting the seconds away
And solemnly telling me — “Tock, tick, tock” —
It is time I was joining my slumbering flock
Where the drowsy-eyed poppy holds sway;
But I linger to prayerfully say,
“Good angels be near to those treasures of mine
When the tempest shall biting blow ;
Through all their sweet dreaming bright blossoms
entwine ;
Bring roses and lilies and summer and shine,
While the fire is talking of snow.”

AN OLD MAN'S LOVE

WHEN she comes back she'll never know
That I have really missed her so.
I s'pose she'd laugh if she but knew
One half the boyish things I do.
An old man deep in love's as big
A goose as is a lovelorn sprig,
And I just smile at times to see
What simple thoughts come over me.

I used to fear long years of life
Would dim the love of man and wife,
But now I find that every mile
The flame grows brighter all the while;
And ever since she's been away
I've counted every hour and day,
And wished the time would hurry when
I'll look into her eyes again.

At evening when I sit and rock,
And hear the ticking of the clock, —
'T was given us the day we wed,
He heard it, too, the boy that's dead, —

An Old Man's Love

Then with the stillness all around
I think of years when first I wound
That dear old clock, and thoughts arise
That bring a mist before my eyes.

But they are sort of pleasant tears,
The ones you call through years and years
Of pleasure sprinkled through with pain
Like April sunshine dashed with rain.
Some skies were dark and some were fair,
And joys came tangled up with care,
But after all the thorns and stings
The way was blessed with gracious things.

You could n't make her believe that I
Would on our old piano try
To pick out some sweet courting-tune
We used to sing in love's glad June.
'T would trouble her if she should know
While she 's away I 'm worried so,
For while she 's round the house, you see,
I 'm dignified as I can be.

And then to-day, I had to laugh —
I hunted up her photograph;

An Old Man's Love

It seemed so queer. I don't know when
I've looked at it before, and then
I thought about the Sunday she
First gave that picture rare to me,
And how I kissed it then and how
I kiss it just as fondly now.

I wonder if two hearts in tune
Are n't always in their honeymoon ;
And I'd just like to know if she 's
A-thinking any thoughts like these.
My love I'll hardly dare confess,
But somehow I believe she'll guess
Its depth within the tender smack
Her cheek will feel when she comes back.

THE RED ROSE

GIVE me a rose, a rare, red rose,
To wear upon my breast;
Of all good things the summer brings
The red rose seemeth best.
I know not why she glads my eye
And makes my heart to stir,
But at the shrine of gifts divine
I kneel to worship her.

She is not born among the joys
The smiles of April bring,
Nor in the May, for such as they
Are children of the spring.
But when the noon of golden June
Is rounded full and sweet,
She brings the grace in form and face
Of womanhood complete.

The lily's lips are pure as snow
That cometh from above,
But oh! the heart would be a part
Of joys that blend with love.

The Red Rose

Give me a rose, a rare, red rose,
To wear upon my breast;
Of all good things the summer brings
The red rose seemeth best.

AN OLD-FASHIONED PICTURE

AN old-fashioned picture steals into my dreaming,
 ing, a picture so soothingly sweet;
A little, low cottage with roses half hiding the
 window that looks on the street.
And a woman, within, has a smile for my coming
 (oh, none were so happy as we!)
While the baby she holds in her arms at the window
 is waving his kisses to me.

All day at the forge and the anvil I whistled the
 song she had taught me to sing,
And the words she had sweetened and softened
 in speaking were timed to my hammer's loud
 ring.
And on my way home how my heart leaped when
 reaching a bend in the street I could see
The baby she held in her arms at the window
 a-waving his kisses to me.

An Old-Fashioned Picture

Not gone, but asleep in the churchyard, together,
where old-fashioned roses entwine
A wreath for the mossy old stone, they are wait-
ing, those God-given treasures of mine ;
And though far away from their rest I have wan-
dered, that old-fashioned picture I see,
And the baby she holds in her arms at the win-
dow is waving his kisses to me.

OUR DARK-DAY FRIENDS

OUR dark-day friends! Ah, how we prize
The steadfast hearts who, when our skies
Take on a dull and leaden hue,
Like glints of sun come smiling through
With summer in their words and eyes!

Sweet is adversity that tries
The strength on which the heart relies
And brings to us the faithful few, —
Our dark-day friends.

When skies are all a perfect blue
And wealth and happiness pursue,
Ah, one must be extremely wise
Who can detect the world's disguise!
The storm, alone, can bring to view
Our dark-day friends.

RECOMPENSE

THE gifts that to our breasts we fold
Are brightened by our losses.
The sweetest joys a heart can hold
Grow up between its crosses.
And on life's pathway many a mile
Is made more glad and cheery,
Because, for just a little while,
The way seemed dark and dreary.

THE PERFECT DAY

THE dawn an amethyst; the noon a pearl set
 round with gold;
The eve an opal changing to a ruby warm and
 bold;
The night with diamonds in her hair and on her
 brows and breast,
Her moon-ringed finger made a wand to charm a
 world to rest.

Oh, gracious morn! Oh, golden noon! Oh,
 matchless eve! Oh, night
Whose stars from a diviner sky gave a diviner
 light!
O day of days, within my heart of hearts I still
 enshrine!
That morn, that noon, that eve, that night, Love
 wreathed his dreams with mine.

HOUSE AND HOME

A HOUSE is built of bricks and stones, of
sills and posts and piers,
But a home is built of loving deeds that stand a
thousand years.

A house, though but an humble cot, within its
walls may hold

A home of priceless beauty, rich in Love's eternal
gold.

The men of earth build houses — halls and
chambers, roofs and domes, —

But the women of the earth — God knows! —
the women build the homes.

Eve could not stray from Paradise, for, oh, no
matter where

Her gracious presence lit the way, lo! Paradise
was there.

A FO'CAS'LE BALLAD

I 'VE sailed as far as the winds dare blow,
And I've bunked a while in many a port ;
The ships may come and the ships may go,
I've always found the time to court.
And I've learned one thing, and I swear it's true,
That, old or young, or black or white,
If you're good to her she's good to you, —
For a woman's square if you treat her right.
Then ho ! yo-ho ! for the boundless blue !
And ho ! yo-ho ! for the harbor light !
If you're good to her she's good to you, —
For a woman's square if you treat her right.

I've not been half what a sailor should ;
But the lads are a careless lot of men,
For the gales they blow us away from good,
And seldom they blow us back again.
Yet never I've met with a sailor lad
Who was true to his lassie day and night

A Fo'cas'le Ballad

But he found her waiting, good and glad, —
For a woman's square if you treat her right.
Then ho ! yo-ho ! for the boundless blue !
And ho ! yo-ho ! for the harbor light !
If you're good to her she's good to you, —
For a woman's square if you treat her right.

When the winds are low and the watch is long,
And our ship's asleep in a lazy sea,
I weave me many an idle song
For those who were better than I could be.
And I sing the words I swear are true,
That, old or young, or black or white,
If you're good to her she's good to you, —
For a woman's square if you treat her right.
Then ho ! yo-ho ! for the boundless blue !
And ho ! yo-ho ! for the harbor light !
If you're good to her she's good to you, —
For a woman's square if you treat her right.

THE MAN IN THE CAB

SAFE and snug in the sleeping-car
Are father and mother and dreaming child.
The night outside shows never a star,
For the storm is thick and the wind is wild.
The frenzied train in its all-night race
Holds many a soul in its fragile walls,
While up in his cab, with a smoke-stained face,
Is the man in the greasy overalls.

Through the fire-box door the heat glows
white,
The whistle speaks with a shriek that shocks,
The pistons dance and the drive-wheels smite
The trembling rails till the whole earth rocks.
But never a searching eye could trace —
Though the night is black and the speed
appals —
A line of fear in the smoke-stained face
Of the man in the greasy overalls.

The Man in the Cab

No halting, wavering coward he,
As he lashes his engine round the curve,
But a peace-encompassed Grant or Lee,
With a heart of oak and an iron nerve.
And so I ask that you make a place
In the Temple of Heroes' sacred halls
Where I may hang the smoke-stained face
Of the man in the greasy overalls.

WHEN TO BE HAPPY

WHY do we cling to the skirts of sorrow,
Why do we cloud with care the brow?
Why do we wait for a glad to-morrow, —
Why not gladden the precious Now?
Eden is yours! Would you dwell within it?
Change men's grief to a gracious smile,
And thus have heaven here this minute
And not far-off in the afterwhile.

Life, at most, is a fleeting bubble,
Gone with the puff of an angel's breath.
Why should the dim hereafter trouble
Souls this side of the gates of death?
The crown is yours! Would you care to win it?
Plant a song in the hearts that sigh,
And thus have heaven here this minute
And not far-off in the by-and-by.

Find the soul's high place of beauty,
Not in a man-made book of creeds,
But where desire ennobles duty
And life is full of your kindly deeds.

When to be Happy

The bliss is yours! Would you fain begin it?

Pave with love each golden mile,
And thus have heaven here this minute
And not far-off in the afterwhile.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PESSIMIST

BROTHER— you with growl and frown —
Why don't you move from Grumbletown,
Where everything is tumbled down
And skies are dark and dreary?
Move over into Gladville, where
Your face will don a happy air;
And lay aside that look of care
For smiles all bright and cheery.

In Grumbletown there 's not a joy
But has a shadow of alloy
That must its happiness destroy
And make you to regret it.
In Gladville they have not a care
But what it looks inviting there
And has about it something fair
That makes you glad to get it.

'T is strange how different these towns
Of ours are ! Good cheer abounds
In one, and gruesome growls and frowns
Are always in the other.

An Open Letter to the Pessimist

If you your skies of ashen gray
Would change for sunny smiles of May,
From Grumbletown, oh ! haste away ;
Move into Gladville, brother.

WHEN SHAKESPEARE WROTE

WHEN Shakespeare wrote, the world was
new:

He did not follow others who
 Had grabbed up everything in sight
 And written all there was to write,
And in a clever manner, too.

No, all an author had to do
Was just to loaf around and view
 A field with themes all fresh and bright,
 When Shakespeare wrote.

Folks did not keep him in a stew
And say he 'd plagiarized his Jew
 And Hamlet. Ah, 't was easy, quite,
 For Shakespeare had not rendered trite
Each thought that could one's muse imbue
 When Shakespeare wrote.

THE ANGELIC HUSBAND

THERE are husbands who are pretty,
There are husbands who are witty,
There are husbands who in public are as smiling
as the morn;
There are husbands brave and healthy,
There are famous ones and wealthy,
But the real angelic husband, he has never yet
been born.

Some for strength of love are noted,
Who are really so devoted
That whene'er from home they wander they are
lonesome and forlorn;
And while now and then you 'll find one
Who's a very good and kind one,
Yet the real angelic husband, he has never yet
been born.

So the woman who is mated
To a man who may be rated

The Angelic Husband

As "pretty fair," should cherish him forever and
a day,
For the real angelic creature,
Perfect, quite, in every feature,
He has never been discovered, and he won't be,
so they say.

THE GIRL WHO LOVED HIM SO

“**H**A, ha!” said Chappie Fizzlewig, and he
laughed in boyish glee,
“I’m making love to a dozen girls, but none
shall marry me;
I sigh to them and I lie to them and I fall upon
my knees,
As I twist their trusting hearts about precisely as
I please.”
And the parlor clock
Ticked on, “tick-tock,”
And the gaslight flickered low
As he waiting sat for a chance to chat with the
girl who loved him so.

And when she had frizzled her old-gold hair
and painted her faded face,
She came, a vision fresh and fair, with comely
childlike grace.
“Poor, unsuspecting soul!” thought he, “she
little dreams that I
Flit on from bud to bud as does the careless but-
terfly.”

The Girl who Loved Him so

And the parlor clock
Ticked on, "tick-tock,"
And the gaslight flickered low
As he slyly planned to hold the hand of the girl
who loved him so.

There was no one near to overhear, so he told
her of his love,
As true and pure and constant as the stars that
shone above;
And when the proper time arrived he fell upon
his knees,
And words he wished to emphasize he'd give her
hand a squeeze.

And the parlor clock
Ticked on, "tick-tock,"
And the gaslight flickered low
As with subtle art he won the heart of the girl
who loved him so.

And the tender, trustful maiden, she — she
laughed a gentle laugh,
For she knew each word he spoke was caught by
her sofa-phonograph;

The Girl who Loved Him so

And when he knelt to win her she a button gently
pressed,

And the corner what-not camera in silence did
the rest.

And the parlor clock

Ticked on, "tick-tock,"

And the gaslight flickered low

As she sweetly smiled, did the guileless child, the
girl who loved him so.

The world went round, and by and by he tired of
her love ;

'T was then that she reminded him the stars still
shone above ;

And into court the phonograph and photographs
were brought,

When the young man learned a lot of things of
which he'd never thought.

And the parlor clock

Ticked on, "tick-tock,"

And the gaslight shed its glow,

And the guests all came and he gave his name to
the girl who loved him so.

GRADUATION-DAY ESSAY

A SPRYNG IDYLLE

O H, the gentle grass is growing in the vale
and on the hill;

We cannot hear it growing, still 't is growing
very still;

And in the Spring it springs to life with gladness
and delight;

I see it growing day by day — it also grows by
night.

And now once more as mowers whisk the
whiskers from the lawn,

They'll rouse us from our slumbers at the dawn-
ing of the dawn;

It saddens my poor heart to think what we
should do for hay,

If grass instead of growing up should grow the
other way.

Graduation-Day Essay

Its present rate of growing makes it safe to say
that soon

'T will cover all the hills at morn and in the
afternoon ;

For often I have noticed as I've watched it o'er
and o'er,

It grows and grows and grows a while, and then it
grows some more.

If it keeps growing right along, it shortly will
be tall ;

It humps itself through strikes and legal holidays
and all.

'T is growing up down all the streets and clear
around the square ;

One end is growing in the ground — the other
in the air.

If earth possessed no grass, methinks its beauty
would be dead ;

We'd have to make the best of it and use baled
hay instead.

I love to sing its praises in a way none can surpass,
And poets everywhere are warned to " Please
keep off the grass."

THE VILLAGE GENIUS

BILL JONES was a "genius," so every one said,
A statement none cared to refute.

He had more brilliant thoughts stowed away in
his head

Than figures could ever compute.

He knew all the things of the earth and the sky,

In wisdom he seemed to excel,

But when it came down to a hustle for pie

Bill never got on very well.

He used to write music and knew how to draw,

Could teach any science or art;

Was clever in medicine, understood law,

And had all the isms by heart.

To hear him conversing one speedily guessed

That Bill was as sharp as a tack,

Yet somehow or other he never possessed

A whole suit of clothes to his back.

Bill's genius was known and respected by all

In the town where he used to reside.

The Village Genius

For the rich and the poor, for the great and the
small,

He served as their counsel and guide.

He was prophet and preacher to kith and to kin,

To friend and to neighbor, until

Death called him away, when the whole town
chipped in

And bought a nice coffin for Bill.

THE WORSHIPPERS

THE poet looked at the kingly oak
And his soul was lifted high,
As he saw its widespread arms invoke
A blessing from the sky.
It filled his breast with a new-found cheer,
And his heart seemed all elate,
As he spoke to the yeoman, standing near,
And worshipfully sighed, "It's great!"
.
And the yeoman — one of Nature's lords —
Quite willing to agree,
Said, "Yes, I reckon they's twenty cords
O' wood in that thair tree."

“HOW BE YE, JIM?”

“**H**OW be ye, Jim?” That sunny voice
Comes back through the misty years,
And I see the grace of an old man’s face
Smile up through his happy tears.
Long time he strays down the quiet ways
Where the path is strange and dim,
But I keep the cheer of his love and hear
His words, “How be ye, Jim?”

There came to me, as comes to all,
The voice of Purpose when
I lost the joy of a careless boy
For the broad, bold world of men;
And the skies were glad or dark or sad,
My thoughts ran back to him
Till we met once more at the old home door,
And he said, “How be ye, Jim?”

Sometime in the far-off by-and-by,
When the years are old and gray,
I shall wander down from the busy town,
Through that sweet and quiet way.

“ How be Ye, Jim ? ”

I shall find the rills from the rose-crowned hills,
And drink from their blissful brim ;
And, the best of all, I shall hear him call
And say, “ How be ye, Jim ? ”

THE EVERY-DAY POET

I AIN'T very much of a poet;
I can't soar so awfully high:
I'm kind o' low-gear'd an' I know it,
And have to keep out o' the sky.
An' so while my star-gazin' brother
Kin tickle the gods with his pen,
I josh along somehow er other
And jes keep a-writin' fer men.

I know 'at he's blissfully dwellin'
With gods an' emperian springs,
While I'm down here simply a-tellin'
O' plain human bein's an' things.
Yit while he's up yender inditin'
His loftier songs, I have found
I do what I call my best writin'
With both o' my feet on the ground.

I never have tackled a sonnet;
I could n't write one ef I tried,
An' put all the folderols on it
Without gittin' somepin' inside.

The Every-Day Poet

Fer I understand ef you fix it
 To sell to a big magazine,
You 've got to so fuzzle an' mix it
 'At no one kin tell what you mean.

My mind ain't ferever a-strayin'
 Through sorrowful caverns o' fog;
I 've got a good place an' I 'm stayin'
 Right there like a bump on a log.
I know I 'm too cheerful to "strike it;"
 I ain't got no "study" ner "den;"
I live with my folks an' I like it,
 An' jes keep a-writin' fer men.

WHEN THE TRAIN COMES IN

WELL, yes, I calkerlate it is a little quiet
here

Fer one who's b'en about the world an' travelled
fur an' near;

But, maybe 'cause I never lived no other place,
to me

The town seems 'bout as lively as a good town
ort to be.

We go about our bizness in a quiet sort o' way,
Ner thinkin' o' the outside world, exceptin' wunst
a day

We gather at the depot, where we laff an' talk
an' spin

Our yarns an' watch the people when the train
comes in.

Si Jenkins, he's the jestice o' the peace, he allers
spends

His money fer a paper which he glances through
an' lends

When the Train Comes in

To some the other fellers, an' we all take turns
an' chat,
An' each one tells what he 'u'd do ef he was this
er that ;
An' in a quiet sort o' way, afore a hour 's gone,
We git a purty good idee o' what's a-goin' on,
An' gives us lots to think about until we meet agin
The follerin' to-morrer when the train comes in.

When I git lonesome-like I set aroun' the barber-
shop
Er corner groc'ry, where I talk about the growin'
crop
With fellers from the country ; an' if the sun ain't
out too hot,
We go to pitchin' hoss-shoes in Jed Thompson's
vacant lot
Behin' the livery stable ; an' afore the game is
done
As like as not some feller 'll say his nag kin clean
outrun
The other feller's, an' they take 'em out an' have
a spin ;
But all git back in town afore the train comes in.

When the Train Comes in

I see it in the papers 'at some folks, when summer's here,
Pack up their trunks an' journey to the seashore
every year
To keep from gittin' sunstruck; I've a better
way 'an that,
Fer when it's hot I put a cabbage-leaf inside my
hat
An' go about my bizness jes as though it was n't
warm —
Fact is I ain't a-doin' much sence I moved off
my farm;
An' folks 'at loves the outside world, if they've
a mind to, kin
See all they ort to of it when the train comes in. .

An' yit I like excitement, an' they's nothin' suits
me more
'An to git three other fellers, so's to make a even
four,
'At knows the game jes to a T, an' spend a half
a day
In some good place a-fightin' out a battle at
croquet.

When the Train Comes in

There 's Tubbs who tends the post-office, an' old
Doc Smith an' me
An' Uncle Perry Louden — it 'u'd do you good
to see
Us fellers maul them balls aroun' ; we meet time
an' agin
An' play an' play an' play until the train comes
in.

An' take it all in all I bet you'd have to look
aroun'
A good, long while afore you 'd find a nicer little
town
'An this 'n' is. The people live a quiet sort o'
life,
Ner carin' much about the world with all its woe
an' strife.
An' here I mean to spend my days, an' when I
reach the end
I'll say, " God bless ye!" an' " Good-bye," to
every faithful friend ;
An' when they foller me to where they ain't no
care ner sin,
I'll meet 'em at the depot when the train comes
in.

GRANDFATHER'S REVERIE

THERE's nothin' nicer 'n music when it happens fer to be

Some good, old-fashioned tune we used to know;

But all these modern airs we hear, er so it seems to me,

Can't match the dear old songs o' long ago.

The new-style oppry-music which my grandchild plays is fine

An' classical, er so I hear 'em say,

But while them blessed mellerdies fill this old heart o' mine,

I jes can't like the music of to-day.

An' when my grandchild's thrummin', oh, I've wished it o'er an' o'er, —

An' felt the tears a-wellin' in my eyes, —

Her grandma was a-settin' there to play fer me once more

“The mockin'-bird is singin' where she lies.”

Grandfather's Reverie

It don't seem more 'an yesterday when first I
heard her play

The happy notes my heart has held so long;
But every mile I travel on life's strangely windin'
way

Is brightened by the beauty of her song.
I turned the music fer her an' she seemed so
sweet an' fair,

So like a blessed angel from above,
I'm wishin', wishin' all the while I might be
standin' there

To tell her o' my everlastin' love.
I'd like to whisper all the words I dared not tell
her then,

An' lookin' in the beauty of her eyes,
I'd dwell in blissful rapture while I heard her
voice again —

“The mockin'-bird is singin' where she lies.”

Oh, life was good an' golden when we journeyed
side by side,

An' the cottage with the roses roun' the door
Seemed like a dream o' beauty with my lovin'
little bride

Grandfather's Reverie

A-waitin' fer me when the day was o'er.
We heard the birds a-callin' from the honey-
locust trees,
To mates within the nest, their fond good-night,
While perfume o' the clover came like incense
on the breeze
As we watched the sunset fadin' from our sight.
An' as the golden glory in the calm and peace-
ful west
Is softened to the twilight o' the skies,
So in the June she fell asleep, her head upon my
breast,
"An' the mockin'-bird is singin' where she lies."

EASYVILLE

EASYVILLE 's a little place
Full o' quiet country grace, —
Fruits an' flowers, birds an' trees,
An' the clover-scented breeze
Ain't on any railroad, so
Don't have noisy trains, you know,
Fer to keep a soul distressed
'At's a-tryin' fer to rest.

In the cities, so they say,
Some poor soul, 'bout every day,
Weary o' the grind an' toil,
Shuffles off this mortal coil.
I'm a prayin' Christian an'
Hope to see the Promised Lan';
Yet, if all is willin', I'll
Stay roun' here fer quite a while.

Wish 'at I could have a chat
With each tired mortal 'at
Thinks his life's so big a load
'T ain't worth carryin' down the road.

Easyville

Like to cheer him up an' say,
"Come up home with me an' stay.
Don't you quit a-livin' till
You've inspected Easyville."

DEACON SKINNER'S IDEE

THEY tell me there's persumin' men revisin'
o' the Bible!

Some folks is so all-fired smart, er think they be,
they're li'ble

To have the stars all painted green, an' nen, some
future day,

They'll all conclude to make the sun go roun'
the other way.

They'd like to keep on with their everlastin'
tinkerin' till

They bu'st up everything an' make the rivers run
up-hill.

An' if we give 'em time enough, I hain't a bit o'
doubt,

They natchelly 'll turn the hull creation inside out.

Now, jes as if the prophets an' the 'postles an'
the rest

O' them 'at writ the Bible, were n't the ones to
know the best

Deacon Skinner's Idee

What ort to be put in it! An' a man who takes
away

Er adds to it 'll ketch it on the final jedgment day.

You can't raise crops by settin' roun' and simply
writin' "corn,"

An' folks as tries it 'll come out the little end the
horn.

It ain't no trick to make a book 'at says we all
kin go

A-glidin' into heaven; but that don't make it 'so.

They 'll learn the way 's as narrer an' as difficult
to climb

An' as thorny as it used to be in our gran'fathers'
time;

An' find too late the other place as easy of ad-
mission,

An' jes as hot as 't was afore they writ their new
edition.

UNCLE NATHAN'S NOTION

I 'VE b'en down to the meetin'-house and heerd
our new divine ;
I s'pose I ort to like him, fer they say he's mighty
fine,
But I've growed sort o' fogy-like and so I'll have
to state
Ef he's the new-style orthodox I ain't jes up to
date.

I'm willin' to admit I like the pleasin' way he paints
The future o' the race an' makes the meanest
mortals saints ;
But ef a feller never has to answer fer his sin,
St. Peter better quit his job an' let the crowd
march in.

I may be kind o' stupid-like, but I hain't never
learnt
How we kin handle fire an' not git all our fingers
burnt.

Uncle Nathan's Notion

I don't see how a feller who's a-doin' wicked
things

Kin ever git his soul in shape to make it fit his
wings.

.. In heaven would you care to be with men who,
all their lives,

Was ornery to their neighbors an' their children
an' their wives?

Is rascals goin' to fare the same as good folks?
No, sirree!

An' ef there ain't no hell, by jing! I think there
ort to be.

WHEN THE SUMMER BOARDERS COME

YES, June is here an' now, by jing! it won't
be long until

Our good, old-fashioned neighborhood 'at seems
so kind o' still

An' solemn-like at times, as though the world had
shut us in,

'Ll sort o' waken from her dream an' stir herself
agin.

The medder's full o' daisies an' the trees is full o'
bloom,

An' after dark the fireflies is sparkin' in the
gloom;

The birds is busy buildin' nests, the hives is full
o' hum;

It's jes about the season when the summer
boarders come.

Peculiar lot o' people is the ones 'at come from
town,

They're full o' funny notions, but they plank the
money down.

When the Summer Boarders Come

It don't much matter what they git ner what they
have to pay, —

Jes give 'em lots o' buttermilk an' let 'em have
their way.

'Pears 's if they yearn fer scenery an' never git
enough

O' sunsets an' o' moonlight nights, an' highty-
tighty stuff;

But sence they pay me fer it, why, I'm keepin'
mighty mum;

You'll find me diplermatic when the summer
boarders come.

One year I thought I'd please 'em, so I spent a
good, big pile

A-buyin' tony fixin's an' a-slingin' on the style.

I painted up the house an' barn an' built a picket
fence,

“All moderrun conveniences” I planned at big
expense.

I got some patent foldin'-beds an' a pianner,
too,

An' tried to make the place appear like city man-
sions do,

When the Summer Boarders Come

But when the folks come — jiminy! — they
would n't stop a day;
Such "comforts" made 'em tired, so they 'd up
an' go away.

So then I scraped the paint all off the fence an'
barn an' house,
An' cast aside my nice store clothes fer overalls
an' blouse.

In place o' every door-knob I contrived a wooden
latch,

I ripped the shingles off the roof an' made a leaky
thatch.

The patent pump I traded fer a windlass an' a rope,
The bath-room is a horse-trough an' a hunk o'
home-made soap.

The foldin'-beds an' likewise the pianner's cheer-
ful thrum —

Oh, we hide 'em in the attic when the summer
boarders come.

An' sence I reconstructed things the house has
overflowed

With summer boarders every year — 'pears like
the whole world knowed

When the Summer Boarders Come

'At here's the place to find the joys 'at's near to
Nature's heart,
The extry, duplex, simon-pure, without a touch
o' art.
Folks like my homely dialect an' ask me fer to
spin
Some simple yarn an' by an' by they'll ask fer
it agin;
So I've jes got to jolly 'em; but say, it's tough,
by gum!
Fer me who's been through Harvard, when the
summer boarders come.

THE PROCRASTINATIONIST

THERE used to be a feller who
 'U'd sit an' tell what he 'u'd do.
He 'd show 'em how to make a hit
When wunst he got aroun' to it.
An' he was smart. No one 'u'd doubt
He knowed what he was talkin' 'bout;
It seemed jes 's if he'd clearly planned
Success, ner missed a "if" er "and."

He said he 'd write a book in which
'T was certain he 'u'd strike it rich.
He 'd outlined lots o' plays 'at he
'U'd bet 'at folks 'u'd flock to see.
He had a lectur' on the string
He knowed 'u'd draw like everything;
An' lots o' schemes to bring him gold,
More 'an a circus tent 'u'd hold.

I've heerd that feller sit an' spin
His plans fer scoopin' up the tin
Until down in my bones I felt
He 'd surely die a Vanderbilt.

The Procrastinationist

When wunst he got right down to biz,
I knowed the earth 'u'd soon be his,
An' when he asked me, now an' nen,
I let him have a "five" er "ten."

The years went on, as years 'll do,
An' he kep' on a-talkin', too,
Till in the potter's field one day
They laid this man o' words away,
An' writ upon a slab above
That soul 'at allers seemed to love
To chin an' chin an' chin an' chin,
"Here lies a man who might 'a' been."

HANK HAINES'S PHILOSOPHY

YOU've all heerd tell o' Haines, I s'pose? —
Hank Haines — well, anyway, by jing!

Now, there 's a man 'll quit his meals to argify
'bout anything.

It's joy fer him to git some fact concernin'
which they ain't a doubt

In anybody's mind, an' nen jes turn the hull
thing inside out.

Why, all the wise men o' the past, Hank takes
'em up an', one by one,

He proves they was n't any good, an' shows you
what they might 'a' done.

An' all the great philosophers an' all the sages
did n't know

One half the facts 'at Hank kin tell, ef what he
says is so is so.

The other afternoon when Hank was down at
Slocum's groc'ry store,

Where he's most allers sure to be with 'bout a
half a dozen more,

Hank Haines's Philosophy

An' Hank was tellin' how ef he was king the
earth would be as nice

An' kind an' lovin'-like an' sweet as what it is in
Paradise, —

Hank's wife slipped in an' said, "Hank Haines,
you know you ort to be at work,

You keep me slavin' day an' night while you jes
loaf, you lazy shirk!

You 're roun' fer meals three times a day but
never earn a single cent!

You trot yourself right home," said she, "an' cut
some wood!" An' Hank, he went.

A MINING-CAMP INCIDENT

T WAS lively 'bout our minin'-town ;
The men a-hustlin' up an' down,
An' busy diggin', night an' day,
A-huntin' claims where dirt 'u'd pay.
We 'd barely time to eat er sleep,
An', weather good er bad, we 'd keep
A-workin' on with drill an' pick,
An' no one dreamed o' gettin' sick.

With heaps o' gold there to be got,
'T ain't strange we humped ourselves a lot,
An' toted dirt an' lifted rocks,
Each man as strong as any ox.
'T was lively workin' there, you bet,
Where every feller tried to get
His hands on all the dust he could,
An' jes laid low a-sawin' wood.

We 'd scores o' miners, rough an' brown,
But not a woman in the town, —
Not one in the hull calabash !
We made our coffee, cooked our hash,

A Mining-Camp Incident

An' done the sewin', what was done,
An' baked our bread, an' every one
Seemed quite content to do without
"The fairer sex" you read about.

'T was sech a high an' healthy place
We'd never had a single case
O' sickness sence the camp begun,
An' it astonished every one
When word was passed about one day,
"A doctor's comin' here to stay!"
An' everybody joked an' said
The doctor 'u'd be the first one dead.

But, sufferin' fish-hooks! was n't we
A flabbergasted crowd to see
A woman come to camp one day
An' hang her shingle out? Why, say!
'T was sech a howlin' big surprise
We hardly dast believe our eyes;
An' all the fellers stood about
As though it jes clean knocked 'em out.

"Kate Smith, M.D.," her shingle read,
An', sirs, she meant jes what she said.

A Mining-Camp Incident

She proved a lady through an' through,
But 't was n't but a day er two
Till men who 'd been so strong an' well
All had the blamedest, sickest spell,
An' not a man in all the camp
But what he had a pain er cramp.

You never see so many ills !
It kep' her busy sellin' pills
An' powders ; she was makin' more
Than any doctor made afore.
Them who had boasted bein' strong
All fell to ailin' right along ;
But every man 'at sought her art
We knowed had trouble with his heart.

It's hard to tell what we'd 'a' done,
All gettin' sicker, every one ;
Our claims a-goin' all to smash,
The doctor gettin' all our cash ;
But, finally, Jed Watkins, who
Had saved o' gold a ton er two,
He wed the doctor one fine day
An' took her to the East to stay.

A Mining-Camp Incident

'T was curious ; as soon as she
Was wed an' left the camp, why, we
All went about our work again.
You never see a lot o' men
Who 'd all perfessed to be so sick
Get over anything so quick.
But this we learned — gals, when they please,
Kin cause er cure the heart-disease.

THE "JUMPIN'-OFF PLACE"

WHEN we reach the jumpin'-off place, why,
I'd jes like to know

Which way a feller ort to jump, an' where he 's
goin' to go.

An' ain't there some delightful way in which it
may be planned

So as a mortal can pervide a nice, soft place to
land?

To fill our pockets full o' gold, it somehow seems
to me,

Would not prove, as the feller says, the very
best idee;

Fer gold an' all sech earthly things, ef what I
think is right,

'Ll only help to make the jolt the harder when
we light.

I have a notion if we try all through our livin'
years

To fill the world with sun an' shine, an' charm
away the tears,

The "Jumpin'-off Place"

An' speak the kind an' lovin' words, and do the
lovin' deeds

'At all the while an' everywhere 'most everybody
needs,

'At we 'll become so kind o' used to angel ways
an' things

'At in our hearts we 'll sort o' grow a pair o'
purty wings,

So when we come to leave the world we 'll jes
jump off an' fly

An' not go tumblin' everywhere, but soar up in
the sky.

TAKE IT EASY

DON'T you worry,
Don't you hurry;
Take it easy when you can.
Allers choppin'
Without stoppin'
To grind your ax 's a foolish plan.

Don't keep mussin'
' Roun' an' fussin'
Over somepin'. Some I know
'S so all-fired
Worn an' tired,
Make the folks about 'em so.

Don't keep fightin'
Without sightin';
Take your time an' git your aim.
Don't ferever
Shoot an' never
Bag your proper share o' game.

Take it Easy

Don't you borrow
Care an' sorrow;
Make more progress, so I find,
Sometimes settin'
Roun' a-lettin'
Things go 'bout as they've a mind.

Like a feller
'At's kind o' meller
An' easy-like — no time to see
Some infernal
Thing eternal-
Ly distressin' him an' me.

ME AN' 'LIZA JANE

IT's fifty year an' more ago sence me an' 'Liza
Jane,

A-walkin' home from meetin', through a sweet
an' shady lane,

Agreed it was the best fer us to join our hands
fer life:

An' hain't I allers blessed the day she said she'd
be my wife!

We've had our little fallin's-out, the same as all
the rest,

But all the while I've knowed 'at she's the kind-
est an' the best,

The truest an' fergivin'est, fer I begin to see
She's had to be an angel fer to git along with me.

Fer sence I'm gittin' on in years I sort o' set
around

An' kind o' specellate about the things 'at's more
perfound;

Me an' 'Liza Jane

An' as my mind goes strayin' back, along the
path o' life,

I jes begin to see how much I owe that good,
old wife.

You would n't think her handsome, 'cause your
eyes 'll never see

The many lovin' deeds she's done to make her
dear to me.

But, say! the things 'at she's gone through, fer
love o' me an' mine,

Is 'nuff to make a feller think her beauty most
divine!

I s'pose I done the best I could to make her
burdens light,

Yit, lookin' back, I seem to see so much 'at
was n't right—

So much 'at brought her sorrow—yit, through
all the changin' years,

I've seen her keep her faith in me, a-smilin'
through her tears.

An' now we're old together, but to me she's
young an' fair

As when the rose was in her cheek, the sunshine
in her hair;

Me an' 'Liza Jane

An' while I hold her hand in mine an' journey
down the hill,
I'll make life's sunset good an' sweet — God
helpin' me, I will!

AN AUTUMNAL REVERIE

JUST an humble, plain-faced woman,
Middle-aged an' somewhat gray;
True an' wholesome-like an' human, —
Kind o' grave an' kind o' gay.
Makes me think o' early autumn,
Grapes a-purplin' on the vine,
Where the first faint frost has caught 'em,
Caught an' kissed 'em into wine.

Deep-voiced boys now call her "mother," —
Baby boys that's grown to be,
By some magic trick er other,
In a year as tall as she:
Girls that yesterday were clingin'
To her skirts, I've seen o' late
With the neighbor boys a-swingin'
At the rose-wreathed garden gate.

While across her brow Time's finger
Writes the plainer tales o' truth,
In her heart there still must linger
All the flowery dreams o' youth.

An Autumnal Reverie

Fields are sweet with bloomy clover,
Life is crowned with blissful joys ;
Love's pure gold she 's coinin' over
In her happy girls an' boys.

Seems as though the cup Fate brings us
Is a sort o' bitter-sweet,
Kind o' soothes an' kind o' stings us, —
Mirth an' melancholy meet.
Grief comes hushin' all our laughter,
Fairest skies are clouded o'er,
But the sunshine follows after,
Always brighter than before.

Spring may fade an' Summer vanish,
Autumn yield to Winter's sway,
Yet the years can never banish
Beauty Love has crowned with May.
In the chimney-corner, cozy,
Dreamin' in the firelight's glow,
I shall see her cheeks blush, rosy,
As I saw them long ago.

“WHITHER?”

IT's a long, long time sence mother went away,
Sence she went away an' took the sunshine
with her;

But I'm thinkin' an' a-thinkin' about her every
day,

An' all the while a-askin' "Whither, whither?"
All the while a-askin' "Whither?"

The children all imagine 'at I'm tolerably
content,

An' it's well they never guess how much I'd
ruther —

Though all o' them have done their best to please
me sence she went —

Be where 'at I could spend my days with
mother;

Yes, sir! I'd like to be with mother.

It 'pears like she can't be so very, very fur,

Fer every now an' nen she seems so near me,

Ef no one else is listenin', I sort o' talk with her;

An' somehow I believe 'at she can hear me;

I really b'lieve 'at she can hear me.

“ Whither ? ”

An' take it in the night, when I'm sort o' half
asleep

An' I think o' somepin' 'at I want to tell her,
An' fin' my arm is empty where she allers used
to keep

Her head, 'at's mighty tryin' on a feller;
You bet! 'at's tryin' on a feller.

It's a long, long time sence mother went away,
Sence she went away an' took the sunshine with
her;

But I'm thinkin' an' a-thinkin' about her every
day,

An' all the while a-askin' “ Whither, whither? ”
All the while a-askin' “ Whither? ”

AUNT LUCINDA'S COOKIES

O BAKER, you have n't, in all your shop,
A cookie fit to be tried,
For the art of making them came to a stop
When my Aunt Lucinda died.
I can see her yet, with her sleeves uprolled,
As I watch her mix and knead
The flour and eggs, with their yolks of gold,
The butter and sugar, just all they'll hold,
And spice them with caraway seed.

Oh, that caraway seed ! I see the nook
Where it grew by the garden-wall ;
And just below is the little brook
With the laughing waterfall.
Beyond are the meadows, sweet and fair,
And flecked with the sun and shade ;
And all the beauties of earth and air
Were in those cookies, so rich and rare,
My Aunt Lucinda made.

Aunt Lucinda's Cookies

So, add one more to the world's lost arts,
For the cookies you make are sad,
And they have n't the power to stir our hearts
That Aunt Lucinda's had;
For I see her yet, with sleeves uprolled,
And I watch her mix and knead
The flour and eggs, with their yolks of gold,
The butter and sugar, just all they 'll hold,
And spice them with caraway seed.

THE OLD BELL-COW

WHEN I was but a boy, I loved so happily
to roam
Through every nook and corner of the dear old
country home ;
At dewy morn to pasture I would drive the cows,
and when
The shades of eventide drew on, I drove them
home again.
And one among their number I remember very
well,—
It seems but yesterday I saw the cow that wore
the bell ;
She was not fairer than the rest, nor any finer
breed,
Yet all the others followed her, wherever she
might lead ;
And in my youthful mind I used to wonder why
and how
It was that all the cattle tagged the old bell-cow.

The Old Bell-Cow

Strange years of shadow and of shine have
passed away since then,

And now I mingle daily with the hosts of busy
men.

And still I muse more earnestly than what I
used to do,

For men, I find, are likewise quite peculiar
creatures, too.

And some have natures made of gold, without a
speck or flaw,

While some are only gilded forms, all padded
out with straw;

And while the modest, worthy man the world is
slow to heed,

The counterfeit, who loudly brags, steps in and
takes the lead.

The one who makes the noise is sure to catch the
crowd; and now

I know why all the cattle tagged the old bell-
cow.

THE GOLDEN AGE

Oh, the olden, golden days,
Oh, the pebbled path that strays
Where the yellow willow quivers by the river's
winding ways;
Oh, the lazy, hazy stream
Where the lilies drowse and dream,
Their sunny hearts of honey in their burnished
bowls of cream.

Oh, the youthful, truthful times,
When the world was wrapped in rhymes,
And hills and dells were silver bells that rang
their rarest chimes;
Oh, still they thrill me when
I thwart the thoughts of men,
And, just a boy, amid the joy of living, live
again.

FOLLOWING THE BAND

LIFE was a joy when I was a boy,
In the days of long ago,
When eye and ear could see and hear
The things it was good to know.
But the kind old earth once glad with mirth
And pleasures high and grand,
Seems stale and tame since I became
Too big to follow the band.

Yet I dare say earth holds to-day
About as much or more
Of joy and cheer, right now and here,
Than ever it held before.
But by our pride we're now denied
Good gifts on every hand ;
We've grown too proud to follow the crowd, —
Too big to follow the band.

I'd like to stray in a careless way
Through the broad, green fields of youth,
And wander back along life's track
To the blissful springs of truth.

Following the Band

I 'd like to trade my woes, self-made,
And the cares that come to men,
For the keen delight of a boy's glad right
To follow the band again.

THE MOTHER'S DREAM

BOY, your mother's dreaming ; there's a picture pure and bright
That gladdens all her homely tasks at morning,
noon, and night ;
A picture where is blended all the beauty born
of hope,
A view that takes the whole of life within its
loving scope.

She's dreaming, fondly dreaming of the happy
future when
Her boy shall stand the equal of his grandest
fellow-men.
Her boy, whose heart with goodness she has
labored to imbue,
Shall be in her declining years her lover proud
and true.

She's growing old ; her cheeks have lost the
blush and bloom of spring,
But oh ! her heart is proud because her son shall
be a king ;

The Mother's Dream

Shall be a king of noble deeds, with goodness
crowned, and own

The hearts of all his fellow-men, and she shall
share his throne.

Boy, your mother's dreaming; there's a picture
pure and bright

That gladdens all her homely tasks at morning,
noon, and night ;

A view that takes the whole of life within its
loving scope ;

O boy, beware ! you must not mar that mother's
dream and hope.

THE WORLD'S VICTORS

HURRAH for the beacon-lights of earth, —
The brave, triumphant boys !
Hurrah for their joyous shouts of mirth,
And their blood-bestirring noise !
The bliss of being shall never die,
Nor the old world seem depressed
While a boy's stout heart is beating high,
Like a glad drum in his breast.

Ye wise professors of bookish things,
That burden the souls of men,
Go trade your lore for a boy's glad wings,
And fly to the stars again.
Nor grope through a shrunken, shrivelled world
That the years have made uncouth,
But march 'neath the flaunting flags unfurled
By the valiant hands of youth.

Oh, never the lamp of age burns low
In its cold and empty cup,
But Youth comes by with his face aglow,
And a beacon-light leaps up.

The World's Victors

The gloomiest skies grow bright and gay,
And the whispered clouds of doubt
Are swept from the brows of the world away
By a boy's triumphant shout.

MOTHER'S APRON-STRINGS

WHEN I was but a verdant youth
I thought the truly great
Were those who had attained, in truth,
To man's mature estate.
And none my soul so sadly tried
Or spoke such bitter things
As he who said that I was tied
To mother's apron-strings.

I loved my mother, yet it seemed
That I must break away
And find the broader world I dreamed
Beyond her presence lay.
But I have sighed and I have cried
O'er all the cruel stings
I would have missed had I been tied
To mother's apron-strings.

O happy, trustful girls and boys!
The mother's way is best.
She leads you mid the fairest joys,
Through paths of peace and rest.

Mother's Apron-Strings

If you would have the safest guide,
And drink from sweetest springs,
Oh, keep your hearts forever tied
To mother's apron-strings.

THE UNWRITTEN LETTER

THE streets of the city seemed filled with
delight

And glad with the babble of joy ;

Gay voices of pleasure made merry the night

And dwelt in the thoughts of a boy.

The reefs of distress in that ocean of strife

Were hid in its sparkle and foam,

And youth found no time in the laughter of life

To write to the loved ones at home.

He loved them, ah yes ! for he knew they were
true

And would serve him in sickness or health,

No task but their hands would most joyfully do

To aid him in want or in wealth.

At morning and evening they whispered his
name,

Though far from their paths he would roam,

Yet found he no time in his pleasures — for
shame ! —

To write to the loved ones at home.

The Unwritten Letter

A message, — “Your mother is dead, and she
died

With the name of her boy on her tongue.”
And oh, for the letter her heart was denied, —
The song that can never be sung!
And all through the years he was angry at Fate,
Quite after the manner of men,
But oh, 't was forever and ever too late
To write to that mother again!

THE WHISTLING BOY

WHEN the curtains of night, 'tween the
dark and the light,

Drop down at the set of the sun,
And the toilers who roam, to the loved ones
come home,

As they pass by my window is one
Whose coming I mark, for the song of the lark
As it joyously soars in the sky
Is no dearer to me than the notes, glad and free,
Of the boy who goes whistling by.

If a sense of unrest settles over my breast
And my spirit is clouded with care,
It all flies away if he happens to stray
Past my window a-whistling an air.
And I never shall know how much gladness I
owe

To this joy of the ear and the eye,
But I'm sure I'm in debt for much pleasure I
get

To the boy who goes whistling by.

The Whistling Boy

And this music of his, how much better it is
Than to burden his life with a frown,
For the toiler who sings to his purposes brings
A hope his endeavor to crown.
And whenever I hear his glad notes, full and
clear,
I say to myself I will try
To make all of life with a joy to be rife,
Like the boy who goes whistling by.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

ONE day, in huckleberry-time, when little
Johnny Flails

And half-a-dozen other boys were starting with
their pails

To gather berries, Johnny's pa, in talking with
him, said

That he could tell him how to pick so he'd come
out ahead.

"First find your bush," said Johnny's pa, "and
then stick to it till

You've picked it clean. Let those go chasing
all about who will

In search of better bushes; but it's picking tells,
my son —

To look at fifty bushes does n't count like pick-
ing one."

And Johnny did as he was told; and, sure enough,
he found,

By sticking to his bush while all the others chased
around

The Secret of Success

In search of better picking, 't was as his father
said ;

For, while the others looked, he worked, and thus
came out ahead.

And Johnny recollected this when he became a
man,

And first of all he laid him out a well-determined
plan ;

So, while the brilliant triflers failed with all their
brains and push,

Wise, steady-going Johnny won by "sticking to
his bush."

NOW AND WAITAWHILE

LITTLE Jimmie Waitawhile and little Johnnie
Now
Grew up in homes just side by side; and that,
you see, is how
I came to know them both so well, for almost
every day
I used to watch them in their work and also in
their play.

Little Jimmie Waitawhile was bright and steady,
too,
But never ready to perform what he was asked
to do;
“Wait just a minute,” he would say, “I’ll do it
pretty soon,”
And things he should have done at morn were
never done at noon.

He put off studying until his boyhood days were
gone;
He put off getting him a home till age came
stealing on;

Now and Waitawhile

He put off everything, and so his life was not a
joy,
And all because he waited "just a minute" while
a boy.

But little Johnnie Now would say, when he had
work to do,
"There's no time like the present time," and
gaily put it through.
And when his time for play arrived he so enjoyed
the fun;
His mind was not distressed with thoughts of
duties left undone.

In boyhood he was studious and laid him out a
plan
Of action to be followed when he grew to be a
man;
And life was as he willed it, all because he'd not
allow
His tasks to be neglected, but would always do
them "now."

Now and Waitawhile

And so in every neighborhood are scores of little
boys

Who by and by must work with tools when they
have done with toys.

And you know one of them, I guess, because I
see you smile;

And is he little Johnnie Now or Jimmie Wait-
awhile?

A DAY-DREAM

JOHN HENRY sat on a hard, oak bench in the
Big Grove district school;
He was tired of being shut indoors; he was tired
of rote and rule;
He was tired of everything dull and slow,
And he sighed to get outdoors and grow.

The old, school clock ticked on, "tick-tock," but
so lazily, alas!
That the poor boy sighed to himself and thought
the day would never pass;
And he said, with a tinge of deep disgust,
"I wish that blamed old clock 'u'd bu'st!"

And by and by on the slanting desk he laid his
weary head,
And looked outdoors where the apple-trees were
blooming white and red;
Out through the window where it seemed
About like Paradise, and dreamed.

A Day-Dream

He dreamed of the meadows fresh and fair, and
 he dreamed of the butterflies,
The happy birds, the busy bees, the lovely, deep-
 blue skies,
And the drowsy songs of babbling brooks ;
He dreamed of everything — but books.

He knew that down in the sunny vales the cow-
 slips were in bloom,
And he fancied he could almost smell the blue-
 bells' faint perfume ;
And he dreamed he wandered gaily through
The woods where the sweet May-apples grew.

And by and by a robin came and perched upon
 a tree
Close by the schoolhouse window, where the
 dreaming boy could see ;
And he said, " I'll pretend I've got a gun,"
As boys will often do in fun.

And quite forgetting he sat in school, he aimed
 his finger straight
At the happy bird that swung outside, not think-
 ing of its fate,

A Day-Dream

Till the boy whose aim was fixed, cried,
“Bang!”

And the loud report through the schoolroom
rang.

The scholars were greatly scared, of course, but
the robin flew away,

And the boy who had wandered in a dream got
no recess that day;

And the teacher then laid down the rule:

“Bird-shooting not allowed in school.”

A HAPPY FAMILY

I KNOW a happy family of cunning boys and girls,

Who have such round and rosy cheeks and pretty,
golden curls.

In all that they may have to do they pleasantly agree,

And every one of them is kind and good as good
can be,

They never call each other names, nor pull each
other's hair,

Nor find the slightest bit of fault with what they
have to wear.

They never cry at night because they have to go
to bed,

Nor ever frown at any one, no matter what is
said.

Not one of them was ever known to try to tease
the cat,

Or even have a wish to do a naughty deed like
that.

A Happy Family

When they are asked to do a thing, they never
say "I sha'n't!"

Because they're dolls, these boys and girls, and
so, you see, they can't.

THE LIFE SCHOOL

MY little boy came from his school to-day
With his heart in a flurry of glee :
“O papa ! they ’ve taken our pencils away,
And I ’m writing with ink !” said he.
And his breast is filled with a manly pride,
For it joys him much to think
He has laid his pencil and slate aside,
And is writing his words in ink.

O innocent child ! Could you guess the truth
You would ask of the years to stay
Mid the slate and pencil cares of youth
That a tear will wash away ;
For out in the great, wide world of men
The wrongs we may do or think
Can never be blotted out again,
For we write them all in ink.

I WISH AND I WILL

I WISH and I Will, so my grandmother says,
Were two little boys in the long-ago,
And I Wish used to sigh while I Will used to
try
For the things he desired, at least that's what my
Grandma tells me, and she ought to know.

I Wish was so weak, so my grandmother says,
That he longed to have some one to help him
about,
And while he'd stand still and look up at the hill
And sigh to be there to go coasting, I Will
Would glide past him with many a shout.

They grew to be men, so my grandmother says,
And all that I Wish ever did was to dream, —
To dream and to sigh that life's hill was so high,
While I Will went to work and soon learned, if
we try,
Hills are never so steep as they seem.

I Wish and I Will

I Wish lived in want, so my grandmother says,
But I Will had enough and a portion to spare;
Whatever he thought was worth winning he
sought
With an earnest and patient endeavor that
brought
Of blessings a bountiful share.

And whenever my grandma hears any one "wish,"
A method she seeks in his mind to instill
For increasing his joys, and she straightway
employs
The lesson she learned from the two little boys
Whose names were I Wish and I Will.

THE WAY TO SLEEPYTOWN

WHICH is the way to Sleepytown?
Look in the blinking eyes of brown;
Or you may find the misty track
Hid in the half-closed eyes of black.
Winding about and in and through
The slumberous eyes of dreamy blue,
Or stealing across the eyes of gray,
Oh, there you may find the drowsy way.

Follow along the crooked street,
Twisting about two tired feet —
Feet that the whole day through have trod
Paths that led to the Land of Nod;
Keep on going until you come
To weary fingers and weary thumb,
Or the lips within whose gates of pearl
Is the languid tongue of a boy or girl.

The path you seek will lead, mayhap,
Into the peace of a downy lap,
Where angels have sprinkled the dews of rest
In a gracious cradle of arms and breast.

The Way to Sleepytown

Farther on and the way has led
To the calm of a prayer-encircled bed,
Where mother is kissing the eyelids down,
And that is the way to Sleepytown.

MY OLD HOBBY-HORSE

IT is only a well-worn hobby-horse,
And you never would guess, to see
This battered toy of a careless boy,
It could seem so much to me.
For never a steed of the highest breed
Was ever one half so fine,
Or half so fair as is this rare
Old hobby-horse of mine.

But the little boy who rode this steed
Has finished his happy play,
And, smiling, gone through the gates of dawn,
To the land of the Far-Away.
And the horse seems sad that once was glad,
As he rocked o'er hill and lea,
And crossed the streams in the land of dreams
To the world that was to be.

And I often muse as he waiting stands
For the rider who does not come,
Would his heart rejoice could he hear a voice
And the sound of a noisy drum?

My Old Hobby-Horse

And my soul, some day, shall steal away,
And we'll ride to the Hills of Joy,
Where I'll place the rein in the hands again
Of the little, laughing boy.

THE JOY-BRINGER

“PLEASE don’t wake the baby!” His
mamma repeats it

A great many times, but he carelessly greets it,
For how can a boy who is happy and healthy
Go creeping about in a way that is stealthy?
And so in the midst of the calm and the quiet
He comes through the house with the din of a
riot,
And warningly shouts, mid his wonderful drum-
ming,
“Det out of ze way, for ze army’s a-tumming!”

The “army” is promptly suppressed. The up-
rising
Though earnestly brought is not really surprising;
But all are aware it is but a deflection
And sure to break out in some other direction.
And so in a moment we rudely awaken, —
The house to its very foundation is shaken, —

The Joy-Bringer

“Look out for ze fire!” exclaims the fierce
 rover, —

“Ze engine’s a-tumming, you’ll det runded
 over!”

The fire is put out, and sweet silence comes
 stealing

Among all the bruises of sound with its healing.

The baby half dozes in innocent slumber,

When lo! there are heard awful sounds without
 number:

Bass, alto and tenor, drum, fife and triangle,

All tortured and crushed in one terrible tangle,

As the drum-major cries, mid the horns’ awful
 braying,

“Everybody teep still, for ze band is a-playing!”

All those who have dwelt with a boy, and those
 only

Who now are without him, can tell us how lonely

A home may become, how distressed and how
 darkened,

When stilled is the music to which we have
 hearkened.

The Joy-Bringer

And so in the night, with the lamplight low
 beaming,
Across the snug cot where my babies are dream-
 ing,
I thank the good Lord that still safe in His
 keeping
My army and engine and brass band is sleeping.

SINCE PAPA DOESN'T DRINK

MY papa's awful happy now, and mamma's
happy, too,

Because my papa drinks no more the way he
used to do.

And everything's so jolly now — 't ain't like it
used to be

When papa never stayed at home with poor
mamma and me.

It made me feel so very bad to see my mamma
cry,

And though she'd smile I'd spy the tears a-
hiding in her eye.

But now she laughs just like we girls — it sounds
so cute, I think —

And sings such pretty little songs — since papa
does n't drink.

You ought to see my Sunday dress — it's every
bit all new, —

It ain't made out of mamma's dress, the way she
used to do.

Since Papa does n't Drink

And mamma's got a pretty cloak all trimmed
with funny fur,

And papa's got some nice, new clothes and goes
to church with her.

My papa says that Christmas-time will pretty
soon be here,

And maybe good old Santa Claus will find our
house this year.

I hope he'll bring some candy and a dolly that
can wink;

He'll know where our home is, I'm sure — since
papa does n't drink.

“DON'T!”

I MIGHT have just the mostest fun
If 't was n't for a word,
I think the very worstest one
'At ever I have heard.
I wish 'at it 'u'd go away,
But I'm afraid it won't;
I s'pose 'at it 'll always stay —
That awful word of “don't.”

It's “Don't you make a bit of noise;”
And “Don't go out-of-door;”
And “Don't you spread your stock of toys
About the parlor floor;”
And “Don't you dare play in the dust;”
And “Don't you tease the cat;”
And “Don't you get your clothing mussed;”
And “Don't” do this and that.

It seems to me I've never found
A thing I'd like to do
But what there's some one else around
'At's got a “don't” or two.

“ Don’t ! ”

And Sunday — ’at’s the day ’at “ don’t ”

Is worst of all the seven.

Oh, goodness ! but I hope there won’t

Be any “ don’ts ” in heaven !

THE CHILD AND THE BUTTERFLY

“O BUTTERFLY, how do you, pray,
Your wings so prettily array?
Where do you find the paints from which
To mix your colors warm and rich?”

The butterfly, in answer, said:
“The roses lend me pink and red,
The violets their deepest blue,
And every flower its chosen hue.

“My palette is a rose-leaf fair,
My brush is formed of maiden-hair,
And dewdrops shining in the grass
Serve nicely for my looking-glass.”

MY UNCLE CHARLEY

MY Uncle Charley he ain't got no children of
his own,

Nor any wife nor parentses, but just lives all
alone!

It must seem awful quiet 'cause he says he likes
the noise

'At makes so many growed-up folks find fault
with little boys.

He says they ought to run an' play an' holler all
they will;

A boy won't grow a mite, he says, 'at has to keep
so still.

An' Chris'mus-time he buys us horns an' squawky
things an' drums,

An' ma she lets us have 'em, too, when Uncle
Charley comes.

He says sweet things won't hurt your teeth as
much as parents say,

An' s'pose they do, boys has to lose their first
ones anyway.

My Uncle Charley

He says that 's why we ought to eat just all 'at
we can get

Of sugar-candy things before we grow our second
set.

So every time he visits us my Uncle Charley
brings

His pockets running over, 'most, with just the
nicest things!

They's candy-mice an' candy-men, an' lots of
sugar-plums;

It's 'most as good as Santy Claus when Uncle
Charley comes.

He don't think little boys an' girls should go to
bed so soon,

But says they ought to stay up late an' sleep till
nearly noon,

So when he comes to our house, ma, she lets us
have our way

An' us an' Uncle Charley, we all play an' play an'
play.

He barks just like a dog an' makes our old cat
growl an' spit!

He knows the mostest funny tricks! An' when
the lamp is lit

My Uncle Charley

He makes us shadow-pictures with his fingers an'
his thumbs ;

It's good as going to a show when Uncle
Charley comes.

But sometimes ma, she says she bets if Uncle
Charley had

A half-a-dozen boys an' girls all carrying on like
mad,

An' turning things all upside down an' crisscross,
every day,

He'd want to pack his trunk right off an' hurry
far away.

But one time when our neighbor's boy was awful
sick an' died,

Ma hugged an' kissed us, every one, an' cried an'
cried an' cried,

Nor said a word when we was bad an' scattered
cookie crumbs,

But cuddled us just like she does when Uncle
Charley comes.

REGARDING SANTA CLAUS

BOB JONES who lives across the street says
there ain't no such thing

As Santa Claus; he says that it's your pa and
ma that bring

The gifts you get at Chris'mus-time, but our girl,
Mary Ann,

Says Bob 'll know a whole lot more when he's a
growed-up man.

She says that Santa Claus comes down the chim-
ney in the night

And goes about the house the same as though
he had a light,

And oh, so still you could n't hear no matter how
you hark;

I'll bet our cat knows when he comes, 'cause cats
see in the dark.

She says he don't make no mistakes in giving
out his toys,

And never heeds the stockings hung by naughty
girls and boys ;

Regarding Santa Claus

And them that's bad 'most all the while till
Chris'mus-time is near,
They don't get such nice things as them that's
proper all the year.
I wish I'd been a better boy, and never teased
the cat,
Nor stolen jell and cookies, and a lot of things
like that,
But every day till Chris'mus comes good Santa
Claus 'll see
The kind of boy that all next year I'm going to
try to be.

I'm going to hang my stocking close to where
my sister Kate
Hangs hers, for she's so good and kind that
Santa Claus 'll hate
To give her all that she deserves of presents nice
and fine,
And then pass by and never put a single one in
mine.
I kind of hope Bob Jones is right, for if it's ma
that brings
My gifts, instead of Santa Claus, I'm sure I'll
get the things

Regarding Santa Claus

She's heard me wishing for; for ma's so good
and kind and dear

She'll never think I've been so bad when
Chris'mus-time is here.

I GOT TO GO TO SCHOOL

I 'D like to hunt the Injuns 'at roam the bound-
less plain !

I'd like to be a pirate an' plough the ragin' main !
An' capture some big island, in lordly pomp to
rule, `

But I just can't be nothin' 'cause I got to go to
school.

'Most all great men, so I have read, has been the
ones 'at got

The least amount o' learnin' by a flickerin' pitch-
pine knot ;

An' many a darin' boy like me grows up to be a
fool,

An' never 'mounts to nothin' 'cause he's got to
go to school.

I'd like to be a cowboy an' rope the Texas steer !

I'd like to be a sleuth-houn' er a bloody
buccaneer !

An' leave the foe to welter where their blood had
made a pool,

But how kin I git famous? 'cause I got to go to
school.

I Got to Go to School

I don't see how my parents kin make the big
mistake

O' keepin' down a boy like me 'at 's got a name
to make.

It ain't no wonder boys is bad an' balky as a mule ;
Life ain't worth livin' if you 've got to waste your
time in school.

I'd like to be regarded as "The Terror of the
Plains!"

I'd like to hear my victims shriek an' clank their
prison-chains!

I'd like to face the enemy with gaze serene an'
cool,

An' wipe 'em off the earth! but, pshaw! I got to
go to school.

What good is 'rithmatic an' things exceptin' just
fer girls

Er them there Fauntleroy's 'at wears their hair
in twisted curls?

An' if my name is never seen on hist'ry's page,
why, you 'll

Remember 'at it's all just 'cause I got to go to
school.

THE SECOND TABLE

SOME boys are mad when comp'ny comes to
 stay for meals. They hate
To have the other people eat while boys must
 wait and wait.
But I've about made up my mind I'm different
 from the rest,
For, as for me, I b'lieve I like the second table
 best.

To eat along with comp'ny is so trying, for it's
 tough
To sit and watch the victuals when you dassent
 touch the stuff.
You see your father serving out the dark meat
 and the light
Until a boy is sure he'll starve before he gets a
 bite.

And when he asks you what you'll have,—
 you've heard it all before,—
You know you'll get just what you get and won't
 get nothing more;

The Second Table

For when you want another piece your mother
winks her eye,
And so you say, "I've plenty, thanks," and tell
a whopping lie.

When comp'ny is a-watching you, you 've got to
be polite,
And eat your victuals with a fork and take a little
bite.
You can't have nothing till you're asked and,
'cause a boy is small,
Folks think he isn't hungry, and he's never
asked at all.

Since I can first remember I've been told that
when the cake
Is passed around, the proper thing is for a boy to
take
The piece that 's nearest to him, and so all I ever
got,
When comp'ny's been to our house, was the
smallest in the lot.

The Second Table

It worries boys like everything to have the comp'ny
stay

A-setting round the table like they could n't get
away.

But when they've gone and left the whole big
shooting-match to me,

Say ! ain't it fun to just wade in and help myself?
Oh, gee !

With no one round to notice what you're doing
— bet your life ! —

Boys don't use forks to eat with when they'd
rather use a knife,

Nor take such little bites as when they're eating
with the rest,

And so, for lots of things, I like the second table
best.

BROKEN DOLLS

MY baby's dolls are broken, — there 's a miss-
ing leg or arm,
And one, indeed, has lost her head, but none has
lost its charm;
For be they old, or be they new, or be they large
or small,
Within her heart so warm and true she keeps and
loves them all.

How like a mother's perfect love, for though her
children mar
And bruise their precious hands and hearts with
many a stain and scar,
In Hope's deserted playhouse, filled with shattered
lives of men,
She gathers all her broken dolls and kisses them
again.

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